

Connect

supporting student participation

ABN: 98 174 663 341

Number 166-167
August-October 2007
Another Big Double Issue



true for students ...
true for teachers

Teachers and Students: Action-Based Learning in Teams

*In
this
issue*

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Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bi-monthly since 1979.

It aims to:

- document student participation approaches and initiatives;
- support reflective practices;
- develop and share resources.

Cover:

The graphic from the English Secondary Students Association (ESSA) adapted to teacher and student learning - about Student Action Teams.

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Connect acknowledges the support of the Australian Youth Research Centre, Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne

This Issue:

Thanks for bearing with us through the winter term - without an issue of *Connect* in your mailbox. But we're back from travels with another great double issue that explores some very practical issues about active student participation in curriculum and governance. (And, no - no photos or stories of our wandering!)



The work of teachers in two clusters in Melbourne around Student Actions Teams tells us important things about their learnings - about these practices within classes and within schools, about the value of inter-school Student Forums ... and about the value of shared and sharing teacher reflection. These teachers are working quite consciously as part of **Professional Learning Teams**, to think about their experiences, to generalise from these, to share reflections and to manage action that arises.

Such an approach is shown in these networks to be a powerful model for teacher growth, program development and school renewal. It is based in and reinforces the idea of teacher as **competent and enquiring expert**, in contrast to some other professional development models that can view teachers as incompetent or as needing intervention and direction by external experts. So it is not surprising that there is a strong resonance between such models of how teachers learn, and participatory models of student learning. It is no coincidence that, as we think about what makes Student Action Teams effective and powerful, the same principles and approaches are recognised in what makes for effective and powerful teachers.

PASTA

As we went to press, we were advised that the NSW-based Professional Association of SRC Teacher-Advisers (PASTA) is winding up its activities. PASTA has been active for about 12 years and its work has been extremely important in highlighting the formal roles of students in school governance through Student Representative Councils (SRCs) and the critical role of those teachers who willingly and with vision, support, guide and challenge those students.

The need for support for the teachers who work with SRCs (and their like) still exists. But it's important that practising teachers in these roles argue for and organise that support. The possibilities for a revitalised professional association rest in the hands (and minds and hearts) of those teachers. Issues of organisational replacement and renewal are important ones to be considered. The demise of PASTA raises these issues for *Connect* as much as for any professional association. Where **DO** we go, as *Connect* approaches its 28th anniversary? Do we talk of an explicit national network to take over that work? (I've flippantly suggested the *Australian Student Participation Resource and Information Network*: 'a cure for your student participation headaches').

Anyone want to step up ... raise a hand ... indicate a willingness to commit to taking something like this on?

I'm sure (or I hope) there will be more about that anon...

Roger Holdsworth

**NEXT ISSUE: back to a single issue:
#168: December 2007**

Deadline for material: end of November 2007

10 Ways to Kill Student Engagement

The following are 10 ways to kill student engagement.

10. Make decisions for students without students. Rules? Curriculum themes? Evaluation topics? Classroom activities? If you want to really disconnect students, make as many decisions for them - without them - as possible. **BONUS STRATEGY:** If do-able, have students in the room when you make decisions for them.

9. Be the designated driver. Somebody needs to tell students what to think and where to go - why not you? Simply whisper 'the answer' in the ears of students as frequently as possible, or when there is a loggerhead, see strategy #10. **BONUS STRATEGY:** Frequently remind students you went to college for X years, have been teaching for X years, and they are only X years old.

8. Filter what is said and done. Don't let your perceptions of students' inability and lack of knowledge stay silent! Step up and say for students what they can say for themselves.

BONUS STRATEGY: Tell them that you don't believe they can speak for themselves, and speak over them when possible.

7. Throw them into the fire. Don't teach students about the issues they are supposed to be addressing, or about the possibilities they might not know about. Instead, simply take 'em outta the pot and throw them into the fire. **BONUS STRATEGY:** After you throw students

A growing number of educators and administrators are proclaiming their interest in having students feel connected and enthusiastic about their learning, their schools and their educational experience. However, a large segment of today's teacher corps simply does not know what to do when it comes to meaningfully and deliberately engaging students in a sustainable way. For those folks, their best intentions are sometimes undermined by their own ignorance.

The following list is clearly a farce, and I am not serious. I thought using this format would be a safe and fair way to show that sometimes student engagement dies. These are some of the ways that happens.



into the fire without preparation, blame them for not behaving properly and use that as a reason why students should be excluded from the process. (Thanks Sylvia!)

6. Defeat students behind their backs. After students have attended and participated, and once they leave the room or the program or the class, simply refute everything they said. Explain that you do not have the time,

patience or interest in what they say, and work to undo everything students said or did in a deconstructive, anti-collaborative fashion.

5. Privately deny students. You can do this overtly by saying things to the effect of: "We don't want to hear from you right now" or: "Kids are better seen and not heard". Require students to speak last, after adults, and do not, by any means, give them a full vote.



BONUS STRATEGY: When students speak up or show up, stand in front of them or speak over them - no matter the time or place. Show your teacher power and gloat to students about your power as often as possible.

4. Sabotage students whenever possible. Once students have experienced successful activities or outcomes from initiatives where they engaged, go behind their backs and undo everything they did. You connect with other adults better than students: show that! You know the system better than those kids: act like it! You can vote, drive, go to movies and generally do whatever you want to without fear of status offenses or adult retribution: behave that way!
3. Publicly deny students. After students have been successful creating change or transforming cultures, stand in front of teacher meetings and conference sessions and refute their voices. Go to parents and teachers and youth workers, politicians and officials and others, and explain to them that 'those' students were wrong. Be adamant, show evidence and research, and simply exert your strength and willpower over the actions of students.



2. Manipulate students - and then tell them you did that. Now we are getting really dastardly, and anyone who does these things should wear a moustache like Snidley Whiplash. Start by luring students into your activity by promising them rewards like class credit or special awards. Then squeeze their words and actions out of them: Have them write a book, lead a course, facilitate a workshop or some other such thing. Then, when it's all said and done, tell the students that you simply used them to fulfill a grant objective or assessment item! Mo-ha-ha! **BONUS STRATEGY:** Tell them what they did does not really matter, and then see Strategy #3.
1. Punish students for becoming engaged. It sounds preposterous and self-defeating, and maybe that's the point! As soon as students become enthusiastic and connected to the task at hand or goal in mind, explain that they should not be so connected. After they spent all morning on the bus to get there, when they get there, tell them you are not going to meet today. When students finish, take their accomplishment away from them by letting it 'rot on the vine'. Show students that caring hurts, and act like it.

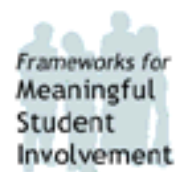
SUMMARY

Meaningful student involvement requires more than simply listening to students or handing over the reins. It requires deliberate cultural and personal development for students, educators and throughout the educational system. For more information about how **SoundOut** can help YOUR school visit www.soundout.org/aboutus.html

SoundOut is a US-based organisation promoting authentic student voice and engagement in schools.

The resources provided by **SoundOut** include:

- *Framework for Meaningful Student Involvement:* <http://tinyurl.com/yumvkm>
- *What is Student Voice About?:* <http://tinyurl.com/2xul54>
- *History of Student Voice:* <http://tinyurl.com/2yhn4f>
- *Student Engagement Research Summary:* <http://tinyurl.com/2cdvjh>



They also draw attention to projects where:

- a high school integrates meaningful student involvement throughout its structure and activities: <http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=227>
- 460 kindergartners (five-year-olds) at the Auburn Early Education Centre in Auburn, Alabama, lead their own project-based learning activities each year: <http://www.edutopia.org/node/4103>
- the National Association of Student Councils operates a 'Raising Student Voice and Participation' or RSVP program: <http://tinyurl.com/26kfmt>
- English students have formed the English Secondary Students Association (ESSA) to promote student voice and empowerment: <http://www.studentvoice.co.uk/>

Student Action Teams (SATs) have been highlighted in these pages for many years and were also extensively outlined in the recent Connect publication: 'Student Action Teams'. SATs have provided schools with an approach in which students investigate, plan and take action on topics such as community safety, traffic safety, the environment, bullying, police-youth relations and so on.

The engagement of the students with each of these topics has been vital, so that they are making decisions about whether and how to address these issue. In the last two years, however, two clusters of schools in Melbourne have been using Student Action Team approaches to investigate and act on the topic of Values. And the abstract nature of this topic has created challenges for both students and teachers.

Articles in Connect in 2006 (#157 in February and #159 in June) introduced the Manningham Cluster's initial work in this area. This cluster of six Catholic primary schools in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs has continued to work in this way in 2007, building on its 2006 outcomes. They have been joined in 2007 by a separate project in the Darebin Cluster, a group of 11 Government primary and secondary schools in Melbourne's northern suburbs. Both of these clusters are using similar approaches to investigate how students can lead communities in effective values education.

Teachers in both clusters are also actively learning about 'how to do it' through an action research approach. Their interim reports reflect on their experiences and learnings so far, and the following article compiles some of these accounts.

Geoff Jones (Darebin) and Sue Cahill (Manningham) have drawn many teacher voices together for this story. Their projects are part of Stage 2 of the national Values Education Good Practice Schools Project.

What do we learn by doing SATs?

Darebin Cluster

The Darebin Schools Network (DSN) consists of 19 schools, nearly all of which are situated in the suburbs of Keon Park, Kingsbury, Preston and Reservoir in the City of Darebin in northern Melbourne. The Network schools include 13 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, a girls' secondary college, a P-12 college and a special development school. About 6000 students currently attend Darebin schools.

The Darebin schools network is one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in the Melbourne metropolitan area. For example, in 2002, the proportion of EMA students in the Darebin network was 57.4% compared with the state 34.6%, which is one of the highest of any school network in Victoria. Darebin is characterised by a high proportion of NESB student and has a very high percentage of indigenous students.

The Network is committed to delivering high quality educational services which enhance educational opportunities for all students. In recent years, all schools have worked together to improve teaching and learning in the middle years of schooling. Many innovative programs have been introduced.

Eleven of the Darebin schools (nine primary schools and two secondary colleges) are participating in round 2 of the national Values Education Good Practice Schools Project, and are using a **Student Action Team** approach - in which students lead investigations and action around the nature and implementation of values (and values education) within their schools and communities. These schools have already been heavily involved in initiatives around student leadership, action and voice, social competencies, well-being and resilience.

continued p 6

Manningham Cluster

Six Catholic primary schools in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs are using a 'Students as Researchers' approach to values education programs. The project is about "**Listening to the Student Voice in improving teaching, learning and school culture in Values Education**".

The project in 2007 is building on this cluster's involvement in an earlier initiative in Values Education (2005-6), which also used a **Student Action Team** (SAT) approach. A strong professional group including the six school co-ordinators, the cluster's University Associates, the cluster consultant, and the cluster co-ordinator meet regularly to support and learn from each other and use their *professional learning* to go back to the individual schools and listen to and work alongside the Student Action Teams. These Student Action Teams, through research, have identified where the teaching, learning and school culture in their schools could be improved and embedded with values.

The SATs will also be overseeing the establishment of *Values Action Teams* (VATs) in each of the six schools, with membership drawn from students, staff and parents. The VATs will be responsible for working with the students to implement action identified from the research the students carried out in the SATs.

Sue Cahill, Cluster Coordinator

The DSN is founded on a strong, enduring culture of collaboration and cooperation in which the diversity of individual school communities is respected and nurtured. This principle of 'cooperation and diversity' underpins our approach to this project and is the focus of one of our key research questions: *How does working in a cluster facilitate and enhance our Student Action Team approach to values education?*

Over the last decade and a half, schools in this Network have been actively involved in investigating and implementing whole-school curriculum and pedagogical approaches designed to enhance student leadership (voice, collaboration and participation), and social competence, resilience and values education (personal learning, social and emotional capabilities). In 2006-2008, we aim to build a whole-school and whole-Network approach to making values education explicit within our cluster, and to continue to build social skills, student leadership, action and participation.

We believe the project has special significance given that Darebin is one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse communities in Melbourne.

Student Action Teams on Values

We are implementing a Student Action Team approach in order to engage students, teachers and parents in investigating, constructing, articulating and enacting the operation of values - including the nine national Values for Australian Schooling - in their school, local and wider communities. The Student Action Team (SAT) approach will involve the establishment and training of teams of students from the eleven primary and secondary schools in the cluster, who will then take on the responsibility for:

- researching the nature and operation of values within their communities;
- auditing school-community values against these values and the National Values;
- identifying priority areas for action ;
- designing and implementing action plans;
- mobilising parents, staff and students around proposed actions.

Teacher Professional Learning

The project team is operating as a **professional learning team**, to drive and support teacher professional learning and collaboration within their own schools and across the Network. Teachers participate in work-based action research and ongoing professional development to deepen skills and understandings, and to develop a shared vision of and approach to values education. They are developing, evaluating and documenting explicit school and classroom policies, programs and practices that integrate effective values education, productive pedagogies and student leadership, social competencies and well-being.

Geoff Jones, Cluster Coordinator



Pre-Service Teachers

The Student Action Teams in the Darebin Network Cluster also have the support of a group of pre-service teachers (PSTs) from Victoria University in undertaking their Values project.

Victoria University employs a program called 'Project Partnerships' in which PSTs are embedded in schools for a year, working closely on a particular project to benefit the learning of students in that school. For these students the Values program constituted their project partnership. The PSTs, drawn from Years 2-4 of the Bachelor of Education program and from the Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education, had no earlier contact with or understanding of the ideas behind Values education.

They were placed in primary and secondary schools (generally one to a school), working closely with the Student Action Teams in those settings.

The learning problem being addressed is layered. At a fundamental level we want to investigate whether the inclusion of student teachers in the values team enhances or inhibits the development of effective values learning in the schools.

But there are other themes. Because this is a cluster based project and because communication across the cluster is important, can the PST team provide important linkings through their own network and through the joint activities they are undertaking in their projects?

Again, how does the project contribute to the PSTs' own learning – both in the area of Values Education and in the development of authentic relationships with and understanding of students?

Dr Merryn Davies, VU

Darebin Cluster

Representatives from the eleven schools in the Darebin cluster meet on a regular basis to plan the project's progress. They have also worked with Dr Merryn Davies (Victoria University) to document and reflect on particular issues relating to the progress of the project within their specific school community. Merryn has also developed a thematic analysis of this reflection.

The teachers' writing to date has dealt primarily with what could be described as establishment themes. Schools operate in the first instance as individual entities and each school has planned its own school-based project. How then should their Student Action Teams be selected and constructed within these distinct school settings? How might students within specific schools be 'turned on' to values themes and to the project – an important logistical question, given that an essential tenet of Student Action Teams involves young people generating their own inquiry and action plans? To what extent should teachers be taking a directive role at this point? And what might a values focus look like for a specific school community?

Who Will Be Our Student Action Teams?

For obvious reasons, selection of the Student Action Teams themselves represented an immediate issue for schools in the early stages of the project. This was, in effect, a values laden issue. Students involved in the SAT needed to show themselves able to take their learning to their school communities and effectively lead the values research in each school. At the same time, selection needed to reinforce specific values or qualities valued by the school in its bid to promote effective values teaching: inclusiveness, care, caring, respect and so on.

Some schools selected their SATs as 'leaders', encouraging elections for highly coveted positions. Some drew their teams equally across class groups and year levels, aiming for a mix of ages and abilities and focusing then on encouraging leadership qualities in the team. In one school, the grade associated with the values education teacher became the Student Action Team. In another, a grade 5/6 class was chosen to participate in the project and from this group, six students were chosen to represent the school at student forums. In the oldest group of students in the cluster – a Year 10 group – the teacher expressed concern that the group should as far as possible be representative of their cohort; however he conceded that the group comprised some of the more 'engaged' or 'involved' of their year level – students who tend to volunteer for activities or positions.

Modes of selection have played a role in the way the teams and inquiries have developed in the initial stages of the project. One teacher made the link between the selection of the project team, the development of particular skills and dispositions in students, and the success of the project to date:

The Student Action Team at Preston South has a focus on Values as well as Student Engagement. Students had the opportunity to place expressions of interest in a ballot box if they were interested in being part of a Student Action Team. A mixture of four grade 4 students, four grade 5 students and two grade 6 students were selected for the Student Action Team. This particular mix of students were chosen because we thought it was important to have more grade 4 and 5 students who will be familiar with the research and action of 2007 who could then carry it over into next year when the grade 6 students would have moved on. There is a mix of academic and leadership abilities within the group with some students being more engaged than others...

This is a fantastic program that teaches students how to work effectively as part of a group as well as developing strong leadership skills. Students have loved the leadership roles they have taken on and they have liked running classes with their peers. I feel this has given them a sense of responsibility and ownership over the project. This is very much a student led project that has increased confidence and independence. (Michelle Smith)

Other schools wrote about similar selection processes, sometimes with even stronger links to leadership roles:

The first phase in the project was to establish a Student Action Team. At Keon Park Primary this group of students is called the Student Leadership Team, as in the previous two years a group of children have participated in the Middle Years Student Leadership project. Once again the selection of this team proved to be extremely popular; out of a total of 74 children in the 5/6 department, 43 children expressed an interest to become part of this team. In previous years the children interested were to give a speech to their peers as to why they would be a good representative for the Student Leadership Team. However many children didn't feel comfortable standing in front of their peers delivering a speech without having any leadership training. Therefore this year children were able to express interest. All children in the department were to vote for 12 students that they thought would best represent them. All children were aware of the role of a student leader from previous years. Student and staff voting proved to result in a good selection of students: grade 5 and 6, male and female. The number of students on this team was also increased from 8 to 12 due to increased popularity. The successful children were all very excited to be selected as part of this team.

My first aim for this group of students was for them to gain a clear understanding of their role as a student leader: what a student leader is, and to work together as a team. All children were very keen. (Jenny Cameron)

Finding Our Way into Values

One of the strongest concerns expressed by teachers at early meetings involved the need to build an authentic spirit of inquiry in the Student Action Teams. Because this cluster is investigating the use of SATs in underpinning effective values education in schools, it was clearly imperative that projects be 'owned' by students at the individual school level. Teachers accordingly spent considerable time exploring strategies to tap into their students' concerns and to engage them in values conversations and investigations

In earlier projects students had worked with questions concerning more tangible or more immediate focus questions – regarding environmental sustainability, for example, or traffic safety. Building student engagement

or involvement had not necessarily been an issue in such contexts. Values Education posed some challenges however. Students were not necessarily 'grabbed' by the theme initially and one primary school reported real difficulties in arriving at a project direction that teachers felt could be true to students' concerns and to the needs of the project. The Student Action Team in this case initially outlined where they felt their research interests lay – and to the concern of teachers, values education did not figure in their Top 5 preferred subjects for investigation. To what extent then could and should the school influence the students in refocusing their interest?

The students at Bell Primary School already have a good understanding of Student Action Teams as it has been implemented in the Grade 5/6 classrooms since 2005. So this year's group of Grade 5/6 children came to school at the beginning of this year with pre-conceived ideas of what they would like to form a Student Action Team around. Unfortunately, none of these ideas included Values Education! During an initial brainstorming session with the students the following topics came up as what they wanted to work on as Student Action Teams:

- Air quality
- Water quality
- Healthy bodies - food, exercise
- School Issues - garden environment
- Litter Management
- Drug and Alcohol Education: Young Adult Education

Significantly however students resisted suggestions that their team might focus on the question of values in the school community. The teacher expresses her quandary well:

As a staff we believe in giving students the empowerment and we were hesitant about forcing topics onto the students. At the same time we had committed ourselves to the values project and to investigating the use of the Student Action Teams in Values Education. In my role of coordinator of the project at school and network level I spent an afternoon with the students discussing the possibility of being funded if we set up Student Action Teams around Values. This impacted on several students who were able to see the benefit of this money to make change happen in our school. But a majority of the students remained strongly focused on the previously mentioned topics as their preferred areas for research and action.

How was the impasse resolved? The teacher employed a range of thinking tools to assist students to identify values underpinning some of their key concerns. In this way the team was able to build an authentically based research topic which reflected students' concerns, maintained the energy and enthusiasm of their initial motivations and accommodated the demands of the Values project.

After discussion with a critical friend at a network meeting, we decided to use a Quality in Schools Thinking Tool to encourage the children to think more deeply about values which might underpin their preferred issue.

Students have previously been taught about the '5 whys' tool and have been able to use it to think deeper about why they come to school.

Recently then they have been working with the Pre-Service Teacher assigned to the project and they have been able to identify one or two values for their broad environmentally-focused issue. They have found that after several whys, 'Responsibility' is a common value in the deeper analysis. Students are beginning to realise that their broad topics really have underpinning values.

As teachers we feel that we have not swayed the students' need/want to address issues that they feel are important to them, but that we have been able to help them clarify aspects of their preferred topic. (Leigh Black)

Preston Primary described a different emphasis which nevertheless related to the question of stimulating a strong and viable research interest which reflected the students' own interests and concerns. Here the teacher reported that the young people in his Student Action Team had been motivated by engagement of interest at an emotional and feeling level and this 'sparking' event had then driven their questions and research.

A booking had already been made for eight students to attend the Halogen Foundation Student Leadership Conference. Eight students and two staff members attended a full day conference along with 5000 students from a wide representation of schools across Victoria.

The conference included a list of high profile speakers from varied backgrounds each with varied leadership styles. Special interests and experiences ranged from the local to global with speakers reaching out and touching the hearts and minds of young leaders with thought provoking experiences.

For this school group, the event provided the needed 'trigger' – an entry point into meaningful values discussion.

The leadership group was emotionally challenged on the day and this was clearly evident on the train journey home as students discussed the social inequities that existed throughout the world. The discussion was ... strongly value laden. The value of Care and Compassion resounded throughout the discussion without being overtly articulated. The outcome of this discussion was that the group wanted to make a difference where the greatest benefit would be felt.

(This) has provided the leadership group with a structure whereby they can investigate the value of Care and Compassion in the local community. The students now feel empowered and ready to begin their research. (Mark Smith)



Some schools reported initial concern at their students' limited understanding of the whole notion of 'values' (and hence of the project). How were we to scaffold that limited understanding to link students and the school community into an effective and substantial investigation? One primary school dedicated a significant proportion of its establishment phase in building a values vocabulary and defining concepts:

Our first sessions involving values education provided a few surprises. Firstly, although the students understood the meaning of the term 'value', they had difficulty in applying it to more than monetary value or usefulness. The students used a variety of sources including dictionaries, internet etc to explore

other meanings of values. We used Venn diagrams to visually represent students' findings and promote further discussion. This led to long lists of values which were then clarified into classroom, school, home and finally community values. (Sidony Menz)

To some extent variations on this process were common to all schools across the cluster, with the imperative for agreed school definitions reinforced by demands of the first cluster-wide 'forum' in which schools were required to workshop their definitions. The definition building and engagement with the vocabulary of values however served as a strong learning activity in itself. In one of the secondary schools for example the exploration of definitions and concepts at the outset of the project stimulated students' interest and surprised teachers and other participants in the quality of thinking and concentration involved in these exploratory sessions:

In order to establish a sense of cohesion in the group, a number of leadership activities were first conducted, activities which the students participated in with a high level of enthusiasm and interest.

The different ages of the students seemed to matter little in their ability to work effectively together, something which will make the next stages of the project a little easier in some ways. (Judy Simms)

It may well be that this exploration, especially when undertaken in a relaxed and respectful way, works particularly well with young people of this age. The reflection below outlines progress of another values exploration at Reservoir District Secondary College in a group discussion led by two young pre-service teachers from Victoria University. This was the first meeting of the group, not all of whom were known to each other.

As Year 3 Bachelor of Education students, Lucy and James are undertaking their placement at Reservoir District Secondary College. Their first task in meeting their 'values' group of six Year 9 students for the first time was to act as facilitators for the school students in building up a poster outlining students' understanding and perception of 'values' – their meaning generally and within the school community.

This was a challenging task for young pre-service teachers. The school students were not clear about the goals of the project and most did not know each other well. They had two periods, some butcher paper and a handful of textas to utilise. It was the start of the school day. At the outset there was a degree of circling each other – from all concerned.

The PSTs, however, took their time; they were relaxed, friendly, curious. They wanted to know what the school students thought. They made it clear that for them no answer would be right or wrong. They made a point of getting to know each student by name and of using those names.

Very soon the school students warmed to the discussion. The ideas came fast. There was a lot of careful listening and significant vocabulary extension: *What's the word for when someone says they believe in something but then go and do something else? How would you say that people look out for each other; what is the word for that - is there a word?*

It was interesting that the school students were not trying to deliver any party line or to anticipate what might be a teacher perspective of what they should believe.

One girl for example took great care in outlining her belief that there is *"too much stress. It's all – we all get too stressed. At school and everywhere. We don't need to be. We could be more – laid back?"*

"Calm?" suggests another.

"Peaceful?"

"Like we shouldn't be obsessing about things that don't matter?"

This particular line of discussion then developed into a useful discussion about what things might matter and what things might not matter so much. Things that mattered were family, health, friends. The 'stressors' tended to be related to performance and achievement, and could be internally or externally focused – that is, they could come from self talk or from teachers, parents and peers. How could they, as individuals, manage those demands?

The overall quality of the discussion in this double period was excellent. Although they did not all know each other well, the school students were comfortable with each other and were sufficiently excited

by the discussion to raise ideas which were not necessarily fully formulated. They shared their ideas well and were able to develop and support each other in taking an emerging idea and working it through to a conclusion. The PSTs guided this discussion and, at opportune moments, were able to convert this fertile exchange into some very useful reporting of ideas. By the end of the session they had a comprehensive outline of the students' ideas about values in their school and in the community.

As for the students – they seemed surprised by how far the discussion had gone and how well they had managed to stay on track. They said that their school did provide some useful and interesting experiences for them – *"like this one for example!"* (Merryn Davies)

Here we might ask what factors contributed to help this mini-class work so well. It is possible that the pre-service teachers were engaging in a particularly age-appropriate way of building a values discussion with young people of this age: respectful of persons and ideas, engaging and 'sparking' interest in the young people.

While it is clear that these young people at times lacked some of the vocabulary and/or concepts they needed to fully manage and convey some of their ideas, it is also clear that they sought precision and were pleased to get help in framing some of those concepts in what they felt to be more effective ways. Their cooperative and low-key exchange was actually very valuable work in the development of values vocabulary.

The pre-service teachers served as effective catalysts for the discussion in this instance. Closer to the students in age than most of the teachers in the school, they brought little 'baggage' and they were clearly keen to hear the students' ideas. The school students were very ready to trust these two and this was obviously a strong factor in the value of the discussion.

Geoff Jones and Dr Merryn Davies

Manningham Cluster: Forming the SATs

Different curriculum models have been used in each of these schools. The Student Action Team at St Charles Borromeo consists of 10 students from grades 5 and 6; at St. Kevins the team is 14 students from grades 5 and 6; at Our Lady of the Pines, all students in three grade 5s make up the team; at St Gregory the Great, all students in four grade 5s are the team; at Saints Peter and Paul's all grade 6s are the team; and at St Clement of Rome, the team is all of the grade 5 students. All these teams meet with their Values School Co-ordinator fortnightly in a formal meeting format and informally between these meetings as required.

The SATs, through their research programs, have investigated the operation of values within their schools - in the teaching, learning and school culture - and where these could be improved. This approach was intended to enable the school to listen to the 'Student Voice' about how teaching, learning and school culture might be improved.

Sue Cahill



Staff reflections on processes

The teachers from the six schools have been reflecting and writing about what they are doing and what they are observing in the schools. Some of these stories tell about how and why certain approaches were taken:

The project began with me working with the senior students forming the Student Action Team. Our aim was to embed the values action research across all senior classes, thus involving a larger number of students. Our school chooses to have composite classes at this level and sees these as a way of increasing students' understanding of responsibility in preparation for their transition into life at Secondary school. The Values Project was seen as a vehicle through which students could gain a deeper understanding of 'Responsibility' in their own lives and actions, and in the world in which they lived.

It was decided by students that, by targeting 'responsibility' as a desirable value, they could make a change to an area they saw as in need of attention. Students responded positively to the opportunity to be part of this action and freely made the commitment to work towards developing heightened responsibility as they could see the value of such a change. Many of these Grade 5/6 students had been part of Phase 1 of the project as Grade 4 students, therefore they had an understanding of the importance of action.

Students set about defining the term 'responsibility' and explored how/why this could be termed a 'value'. They began with identifying issues in the school that reflected 'responsible behaviour'. They watched the classroom, the corridor and the school-yard for any issues related to responsibility, and they were quick to identify areas where responsibility was lacking. Students at this level have monitor duties eg locking school

gates for security, emptying bins and keeping corridor and yard clean, turning computers on and off in the Library on a daily basis, as well as personal responsibilities eg having own belongings ready for the day's work, completing assignments and homework tasks on time, being in class and unpacked before the bell etc.

Discussions continued through the term and lists were compiled with ideas to improve/change behaviour patterns that showed a lack of responsibility. Educating other students through posters displaying aspects of responsibility became a focus. Students were keen to fill available corridor display boards with posters and catchy slogans to attract the attention of other students.

Madeleine Fernandes, St Gregory the Great, Doncaster

At our school, our Values Project is driven by our Student Action Team (SAT). The SAT is comprised of our entire Year 6 cohort, 29 students. These students are drawn from two year 5/6 classes. These classes have a good deal of time with team teaching, where the dividing wall between classes is removed,

so the students are used to working together. It is a very multicultural mix, with students coming from 10 different cultural backgrounds. There are four students who are new arrivals and have very limited English.

The members of the Student Action Team have not previously worked together as a single group. Although members of the same year level, they have been divided into different classrooms each year and have only worked as a year level group on isolated occasions. Bringing them together this year from two classes would, I thought, raise some interesting issues with regards to leadership and personalities.

Initially there was reticence by some on the choice of students to work together in small groups. This was soon resolved after our initial sessions of team building and emphasis on valuing the input of all group members and a reminder that we were all there to work together on our values.

The SAT members have, from the outset, been very enthusiastic and committed to their work with values. As a teacher it is always inspiring to have students come up to you in the yard or in the corridors and say: "It is SAT today isn't it Mrs H?" and when given their answer in the affirmative, to respond with an enthusiastic "Yes!" as they go on their way.



I endeavoured, from the beginning of the project, to instill in the SAT the feeling that they were in a position where what they did could have a real influence on how our school community could improve in its living of positive values. I felt this was important to the students and that many of them really saw themselves as influential leaders in the school, not in a 'power-play' way, but in their ability to make a difference.

I must say how absolutely blessed I think we are at our school with the calibre of our students. They constantly reinforce my opinion of them with their caring attitudes and, in some cases, their ability to overcome difficulties, which could have just as easily brought out a negative side of their character. In our values discussions, on the vast majority of occasions, the students will come up with a positive forward-looking perspective on values and the living of values-inspired lives.

Judy Harris, Ss Peter and Paul's School, East Doncaster

SAT Processes: Student Forums

The inter-school Student Forums provide an opportunity for SATs to come together to plan, report and share. They give SATs public validation and feedback on their work. They also challenge students to explore and practice a wide range of interpersonal, communication, public speaking and leadership skills. And they represent an accountability framework within which school teams have to meet agreed timelines, targets and commitments.



Forum One:

The purposes of this forum and hence the activities were slightly different in each cluster (though there were similarities). In the **Manningham Cluster**, the aim was to build on the 2006 work and to re-introduce the main ideas.

Each school's team was asked to bring some definitions of values, along with some cards listing value terms and non-value terms. We suggested a school-based process:

- Step 1: Discuss in each school's SAT about 'what is a value anyway?' with last year's student members leading. Perhaps: *"Here are some definitions from books, but these are all written for adults; challenge: can we write a simple definition for students?"* Each school then to bring to the forum a POSTER with a simple definition of what a VALUE is.
- Step 2: Then discuss names of some values they know about. What are some things that aren't values? (But are close?) What and why is the difference?
- Step 3: Each school then decides on and brings to the forum 10 cards with a VALUE word (or phrase) on each; 10 cards with a similar type of word/phrase that ISN'T a value. Have a discussion about WHY; the idea will be to challenge other schools to work out which is a value and which isn't and why. Also challenge the SAT to come up with some different values – and they don't have to agree that these are DESIRABLE values – some might be values they want to reject!
- Step 4: The SAT then decides on two that they want to bring to the Forum as their school's priority for work this year (can change their mind later though) – ones that they think the school needs to work on. Discuss WHY (have reasons).
- Step 5: Then prepare two final posters: the first poster names and defines the two priority values; the second poster says WHY these are a priority for this school (what do we see as the need for work). Put the school name on the posters.

At the Forum, and working in mixed-school groups, students sorted the cards into value and non-value piles, giving reasons. They were also challenged to write a list (from A-Z) of values and non-values words. A 'bingo activity' enabled students to look at each others' posters and find out information and ideas from other schools.

The idea of investigating values was introduced as looking for evidence around a possible 'crime scene' and this led into a research planner (as below). Details of research methods were then followed up with individual schools.

In the **Darebin Cluster**, the first forum was to introduce SATs to and engage them with values education issues and to set directions and provide impetus for the research stage of the project. SATs were asked to prepare several items for the forum: a poster of the SAT's definition of 'what is a value'; three artifacts or objects (each with an explanatory card) to donate to a 'Museum of Values'; . Each object was to be chosen to symbolize or represent a different value. Each school was allocated one value from the nine National Values and was able to choose two of their own. SATs also brought three cards with value words or phrases of the SAT's choice.

The Forum was structured around three main activities:

1. Why are values important? An local theatre group dramatised several value-laded scenarios and students were invited to resolve the scenes, choose endings, discuss and clarify the values being displayed. Then, in school groups, students discussed these.

2. A Museum of Values. SATs were asked to examine the prepared "What is a Value?" posters on display around the room. Each school team then contribute their museum artifacts and cards to a central display table, giving a brief explanation of them. Mixed school groups were each allocated a National Value and challenged to construct ('curate') a museum display around that value using contributed objects and cards. Finally, all students were taken on a guided tour of the nine museum displays, listening to a brief explanation by each group of 'curators'.

3. Planning Research – CSI approach. Each SAT was asked if they would accept a commission to investigate and work on values issues in their own schools. As each team accepted, they were handed a 'Letter of Charge', which set down the purposes of, and their obligations to, the project. Students were then challenged to think about how they might go about the task of researching values in their schools, using a CSI (Crime Scene investigative) model: what values they might begin by investigating; what questions they might have; what evidence they might look for; how they might collect such evidence. SATs in their school groups then worked through some Research Planner pro formas to begin planning the research stage of the project.



Forum Two:

This forum, held after the **research** phase, had similar purposes in each cluster: to give SATs an opportunity to report on the results of their research; to give SATs further validation, recognition and encouragement; and to initiate the **action** phase of the project by asking students to think about what could and should be. It links the research to the action.

Again, each SAT was asked to bring along posters outlining what they had done: the nature of the research carried out, the finding from the research and, in the **Manningham Cluster**, what action was already being taken.

The sharing of this information was directed towards providing advice to the project about which examples to highlight in reports around seven key questions such as 'the most interesting research approach' and 'the most surprising finding'.

The second activity was a 'guided visioning' in which students were taken on three imaginary journeys (one to a time when they felt powerful in doing something important; one into the current world to explore what their research meant: what was seen/heard/felt; one into a future world that they could powerfully create) and individually developed summaries about the current situation and what their ideal world might look like. These individual visions were shared in school groups, leading to 'vision/mission' statements and then to 'what needs to change' lists. Finally, in these school groups, students began to brainstorm possibilities for action that they could take to bring about these changes (to schools and communities).

Some formal action planning steps were introduced, but were largely to be followed up with and in individual schools.

Before the Forum: Reporting on our research

**The research
that we did:**

**What we
found out:**

**What we are
doing now:**



At/After the Forum: Thinking about our main value/s

**Our Vision:
the school or world
that we would like**

**Changes:
the main things that
need to change**

**Our Action:
what we can do to
bring about those
changes**



Workshops:

Workshops are of shorter duration, have smaller numbers of participants and are focused on more specific topics, needs or opportunities. They have provided SATs with targeted training on research skills, organising community forums and action planning. For example, in the **Darebin Cluster**:

The Research Skills workshop followed closely after the first forum and focused on developing the skills, knowledge and confidence to plan and carry out research as well as to analyse results. Pre-service teachers planned and delivered

these workshops on each of the three focus areas: planning, doing and analysing research.

The second workshop assisted SATs with organising and presenting a community forum in their schools. Consistent with the commitment to student leadership, a Year 9 Advance class from RDSC planned and conducted a workshop with hands-on, interactive and cooperative tasks.

A third workshop may be held later in the year on helping SATs with planning and implementing actions.

Darebin Cluster: The Role of the Forums in Planning the Action Team Program

Building the SATs at the school level has been an important aspect of schools' early work in the project. Developing a coherent and consistent exposure to values themes has been of equal importance in assuring that the SATs are well resourced and well placed to commence their values work at the individual school level. For this reason the cluster has developed a program of regular forums and workshops which allow the school-based teams to come together to undertake skill building and to share ideas and experiences. The first forum employed engaging strategies such as role-plays and development of a 'Values Museum' in highlighting specific values themes in highly accessible ways. It was pivotal in building students' early understandings about values and the aims of the project, and work toward the forum presentation shaped many of the early activities of the SATs at the school level.

Teachers wrote about their preparation for or participation in the first forum, which constituted the first major milestone for students and teachers involved in the project:

The lead up to the first student forum was rather rushed but we did do a brainstorm activity with the two grade 5/6 classes about the definition of 'values'. The teachers stipulated that they were not to include the names of the 7 values we already have at school or any of the main vocabulary that is on the Values charts around the room. This made it more challenging but very productive. Our joint list was very extensive but did illustrate that they had a common understanding of the meaning of values.

With this chart and the items related to the value of 'Integrity', the JSC students were eager to go to the forum even though they felt a little daunted by the thought of not really knowing what was going to happen and the expectation of them as a group representing their school. While I observed them, I noticed how close they are as a working group and how they are more comfortable working through the activities helping each other, than contributing to open discussion. Of course this is very common at this age, but I could see the evidence of the school values they have been brought up with, through their actions and responses at the forum.

After the forum, we returned to school and the students immediately wanted to try some of the new ideas they had seen at the forum and were very keen to launch into the research. I actually had to calm down the enthusiasm so as to get some concrete ideas and achievable tasks in place over the following weeks. They have decided to do a role-play activity at assembly to help deliver the Value of the Week and to make it 'more real' for the younger students. Considering the reserved nature of many in the group, this is a big deal!

The first role-play was a great success and has been discussed by the other students incidentally throughout the week. More skits are planned for the next three assemblies and then they have decided to think of something else. The forum has been the catalyst for a change of perspective on the way we impart the school values at assemblies and the role of the JSC students as role models. This is probably the most immediate response the students experienced after the forum and the role-plays that they saw at the forum had the most impact. (Jenny Deeble)

The first forum provided some insights into how the very different SATs would work together and whether the planned program would be shown to be age appropriate

for all students involved. Some teachers had expressed a concern, for example, that secondary school students may find the program pitched to younger students and may 'turn off' in consequence. This will be a continuing avenue of investigation over the project. The description below highlights the focus and attention which students brought to one of the forum activities – describing a moment which concentrated students' learning to that point:

As we went round the group and they donated their object I was struck by the focus and seriousness of the students.

The students were sitting in school groups and I had suggested they 'hide' their objects until this part of the program. All were facing inwards towards some blank tables.

When we started, some students were talking quietly among themselves and I remember that I occasionally had to hush the group.

But by about halfway round the group there was total silence and a huge degree of focus of students. They were taking it so seriously, respecting what other students were saying, listening to them – very aware of the nature of the objects and what they meant.

It seemed to me that the students recognised the thinking that had gone into the choosing and presenting these objects and that they were validating and respecting other students' views.

It made it very easy for them therefore to move into the next phase of sorting the objects and of 'curating' them into museum displays. (Roger Holdsworth)

This is an excellent evocation of the absorption of these students in the task at hand – in this instance the building of curated 'exhibits' in their 'values museum' at the first Values Forum. School groups had workshoped in their school the idea of the selection of an artifact which illustrated their allocated 'value'. They had discussed the value and its meaning and had explored ways of demonstrating their understanding in concrete ways. Their artifacts were inventive, creative, often witty. Their offerings included a gorgeously wrapped gift, a water bottle, a flag, a globe, a large key, a set of scales, an intricately prepared diorama depicting two figures, a first aid box and a school song. What could all these objects tell us?

The students' attention in this phase of the work – when they all came together at an interschool forum – attests to the good groundwork already undertaken in their home schools. They had already put thought and effort into selecting and developing their objects and had developed rationales for their adoption of these particular artifacts. They were consequently interested to hear about and understand why students in other schools had made their selections. Had their thinking been similar? Perhaps they had understood the value differently? Was there something new or useful in their approach? And could the objects being unveiled be used in other ways – to illustrate other values for example?

The use of real objects to build metaphors for values is one which seems to work for students at this middle years level. Some were more literal than others and it is interesting – and understandable – to see how the secondary school students used a more sophisticated set of images to highlight their values. But the engagement of all students was an important precondition for the next phase of this exercise which involved groups of students selecting key artifacts to build their mini table exhibitions. The exercise generated great discussion across age groupings and school groups.

Here are three more teachers writing about their preparation for the first Student Forum, and students' responses to it:

School 1: Preparing

This is written from both the perspective of the children and the teacher.

The first week of term 2 has finally arrived and the forum is this Thursday. We need to get organised and get all that stuff that we wanted together. Monday arrived and following lots of preparation the children met and the issues were discussed further. Last term, thanks to [the pre-service teacher], the children wrote their values definition which was very personal and very child friendly. All we needed to do was to talk further about the museum objects and the values: words and definitions.

We met together and discussed exactly what type of things we needed to gather – what objects could we find and how could we link them to values; not an easy task especially for students who do not really know too much about values in general.

We chose a diorama which one of the kids had completed in term 1. It was really great and in lots of ways fitted the bill of 'doing your best'. Our next object was a collage created by everyone that we called 'getting along'. Not bad so far. As we needed three objects, we once again looked at all the values and decided on the one of honesty. How could we show this? What does it mean? Maybe we could show how we can leave money all over the place and no one takes it. We decided this would be a good piece. Generally we were ready for the forum.

At the forum

The day has finally arrived and everyone was quite nervous; not only was this the first time we had come to this sort of thing but it was going to be full of much older children; what exactly were we going to do? Once there it was really overwhelming but we were told to enjoy ourselves so we shall.

Looking at the children on this day it was very obvious that they were nervous. Here is a group of grade 4 and 5 children who seemed quite young next to the rest of the group. We talked about having fun and I think they will try their hardest to do so. The day went well. When we had to talk about our pieces, the children did so with an element of confidence. They took part in all the activities quite eagerly and, at times, though personally feeling like a mother hen and wanting to make sure that they were okay, I really felt that they were getting very involved and wanted to immerse themselves into the whole experience.

Afterwards

Talking to the children later it was very obvious that they had got a lot out of the day. They had not only met and made new friends which I think is an extension of such a day but they also learnt a little about their values and about their roles in this whole student action business. Talking to their parents about what the children had said to them later they all said that they had been very excited and wanted lots more of it. (Natalie Lim)

School 2: Selecting items - preparing for forum

In preparation for the first student forum, students were asked to consider objects that symbolised a value. Each student had to find an object that represented 'Fair Go' and one of their own choice.

Students returned to school over the following two weeks with a range of objects. An exciting lesson ensued where students shared their object and its link to a value.

Students then voted on the object that they thought most depicted a value. Students selected a timer for 'Fair go' and a fishing line for 'Patience' and a cuddly toy dog for 'Caring'.

First forum

The six students representing the grade enthusiastically arrived at school early on April 19th. Arriving at the forum they took their place in the front row with the 11 other student teams.

The warm up activity was lots of fun as they all met lots of students from around the district.

The dramatisation activity where parents dressed up as students and role-played a variety of values made a great impact of the students and helped clarify what a value looks and sounds like.

Students displayed their definition poster completed in class. It was interesting seeing how each school defined a value. We returned to discuss the definitions we liked or agreed with and those we didn't. In the end we were very pleased with our definition.

The 'museum of values' was where we got to share our objects and explain how they represented a value. There was a large collection of interesting objects displayed.

Working in mixed school teams choosing objects, words and phrases to represent a value was quite challenging. Some of the values were easy to find objects for. Others were more challenging.

The forum was lots of fun and helped increase our understanding of values.

Workshop

The grade representative then attended a student workshop on research skills at Reservoir District Secondary College.

We talked first about what research is. Each school group broke up into four activities. The activities were on **planning** the research. Each student from the school reported back to the others on their activity. The second activity was on **carrying out** research. We again reported back. The final activity showed us how to **analyse** research results.

It was a good afternoon where we learnt heaps about researching. (Alison Green)

School 3: Secondary

The first major task to be tackled was the preparation for the first student forum. Students were asked to define what a value was and select an object to represent a particular value, in our case understanding, tolerance and inclusion. I was a little concerned when approaching this task as I had no idea just how the students would respond and, indeed, what decisions they would make. The initial task was broken down into small steps to enable a progressive approach to a definition they were satisfied with. I sourced various definitions of values from dictionaries and provided the students with copies of these. After much very involved and detailed discussion, the students were able to agree on one definition. Their final wording was as follows: **a value is something you believe in that determines how you behave.**

I was very impressed with their efforts and the way in which they worked through the task. All students in the group contributed an opinion and observation and their level of thinking surprised me to some extent. I was concerned that the task was quite complex and one which may discourage them from further work, however the opposite occurred. The discussion served to energise the students in some ways and they became more positive about the whole process.

The discussion which preceded the selection of the object was also very productive. Although the value we were allocated was quite complex, the students were able to work through the definitions one at a time and then contribute opinions regarding what the value actually meant to them. The object they selected to represent the value was a world globe with a ring of people around it to represent inclusion and tolerance. I was very pleased with the final outcome and proud that they had approached the task with such enthusiasm and a sense of inclusion within the actual group. I have no doubt that the students in the Leaders team are aware of values, even if they do not identify them as such.

The student workshop which focused on research skills was the next activity. Four students who had attended the forum were selected to attend and they were all keen to take notes which could be shared with the remainder of the leadership team. The students will now begin to teach the other students the same research skills they learnt at the workshop during next week.

The next step in our values journey is to identify our next major task and establish a plan for its implementation. I have no doubt that the group of students I have will tackle this task with just as much enthusiasm as they have the previous ones. I am actually looking forward to seeing just how much they are capable of, and I am sure there will be surprises in store for the college community. Some staff members would struggle with what the students are undertaking with such positive attitudes. (Judy Simms)

Manningham Cluster:

Actions and Outcomes:

Some things that have happened so far

The SAT process has already led to a number of approaches to embedding values into school practice. In all schools, the **explicit teaching of values** is carried out in each classroom, every week. The Student Action Teams have put the identified values into a priority order, and the same value is taught in every class for three to four weeks. The staff uses the same teaching resources as their main support and a pack of material is made up of other supporting resources and a list of picture story books that pertain to the particular value. A key focus of the project is to enable classroom teachers and students "to establish respectful relationships between staff and students".

The Student Action Teams also lead the explicit teaching of values through **whole school assemblies**. In many of the schools, students organise and lead these assemblies to promote the value being highlighted at the moment in their school. Sometimes a story is read, a role play performed, observations shared of where, when and by whom a certain value has been seen in action. Examples of work done in the values classes is shared and values certificates are distributed to staff, students (and at one school, to parents) who have displayed values in action. Silent reflection is a part of each assembly.

The explicit embedding of values is further strengthened by **visual displays** in all classrooms, in the foyer and hallways of the schools.

At some schools, **official documents** including curriculum plans, school policies and procedures documents have been examined by students and revised to make them values laden. At St Charles and Ss Peter and Paul's the members of the SAT have worked with staff in **auditing curriculum planning documents** highlighting where values can be explicitly and implicitly embedded.

The Student Action Teams also produce a **Values newsletter** in all schools to introduce a 'new' value as the program progresses. This is distributed to all members of the school community.

The students have also been instrumental in introducing various **curriculum projects**. In one school, the Student Action Team process has led to the school being designated a 'No Put Down Zone' in an attempt to foster respect of self and others. All students assigned themselves to a classroom and teacher to become the **Values representative** whose responsibility was to share information and to discuss any questions or concerns.

The Student Action Team process in another school produced a whole school '**buddy program**' where all students and staff are buddied up with another member of the school community. This program was extended by the Student Action Team to the residents of a local retirement village. The residents and students spent time together at both school and the village to share stories about the resident's childhood, workplace and life. The students spent time talking about their lives, interests

and today's world. This 'service learning' allowed 'head, hands and hearts' to be involved in a values based partnership.

Some staff members have written about how these changes happened:

Over the previous year as a staff we have discussed our whole school assemblies and how to make them more engaging and purposeful for our students. We also wanted to provide another opportunity for our student leaders to enhance their public speaking and leadership skills. We are aware that students are engaged and excited by issues that they see to be relevant and real to them over which they can have an influence. I also wanted an opportunity to walk the talk - to show in a very public way that we trusted the students and respected their contributions and abilities to be leaders of the values program.

Having already established a Student Action Team in stage 1 of the VEGPSP we decided that our 2007 SAT would be a great group to take greater ownership and involvement with school assemblies. Our aim was that the SAT would plan and run the last assembly of each month, reporting back on the month's focus value. Our goal was to make the assemblies both purposeful and productive.

I introduced a format to the Student Action Team and they each broke the sections down and volunteered to take a different section of the assembly. Each mini team then had to plan their part of the assembly and enter it on the planning sheet. Once the whole team had finished planning their section of the assembly and the planning sheet was complete they had to attach copies of their speeches and submit this to myself and the school principal.

Part of the planning as seen in the Assembly Planning Sheet, was to:

- Explain in their own words what the value of the month meant to them;
- Choose a class to share their value work for the month;
- Choose children to award values certificates to that had been demonstrating the focus value of the month;
- Select a passage of scripture that confirmed the value.

The Student Action Team was quite excited to be actually running the assembly and were all keen to have a role to play. One member of the team was away when the planning meeting was on and was quite disappointed that she didn't have a role in their first assembly. In discussing with her what she would like to take on, her response was that really all the roles had been planned. I questioned her on what she and the rest of the team would see as a fair outcome that would see all members having a 'fair go'. Using a Restorative Practices Framework they resolved that, when planning the next assembly, this student would get to choose first what task she would like for that assembly. For this assembly she could introduce general business.

The next week saw the Student Action Team present their first assembly. The students were prepared and excited. They had organised their space creating a prayer table and having their PowerPoint presentations ready for sharing on the interactive whiteboard.

A powerful outcome was that the students at the assembly were engaged and supportive, displaying the focus value of the previous month - 'respect' - to their peers. I also believe that this process enabled me to further build up a trusting relationship with my SAT as I am not their classroom teacher. The team were excited that they were trusted with the responsibility to organise and run an assembly a month where their input was valued.

Another outcome from the assembly has been to develop further work on the skills of presenting. The team members did a fantastic job of their first assembly. A goal for us to work on when we present our part of assembly, is to inform the audience of what we are about to do. In their enthusiasm they jumped right in! For example: "Now we are going to present the 'Determination' certificates, for the students that have been demonstrating this value in their classrooms."

Following the SAT values assembly, the School Leadership Team met and looked at the rest of the term's whole school assemblies. Reflecting on the SAT assembly, the team suggested that the SRC also take an assembly a month, leading to a further change in the culture of our assemblies - to one where the school community explicitly displays the value of trusting relationships between teachers and students, where all feel respected and valued.

Larissa Boyhan, St Kevin's PS, Templestowe

Teachers have also commented that:

- Classroom management is much easier as the students have an understanding of what is expected of them and this is reinforced using 'values language'.
- At the schools that have 'peer mediation' programs in place (where senior students provide help to students who may be having issues with other students), the numbers of those needing assistance have dropped dramatically.
- Schools are more peaceful, more respectful and more caring.

Throughout this work there were some surprising results. One Grade 5 student in particular, who is normally a quiet student, really came to life in Values Education discussion time. This student speaks very much from a personal point of view as he has some serious issues to face in his life and is doing so with a remarkable degree of responsibility for one so young. He can relate the concept of responsibility to personal issues, someone in his life, a relative or someone he has heard about. He is a deep thinker who doesn't always see things from the same point of view as the rest of the class. His views and contributions to class discussions are always to be listened to and given strong consideration...

Have we achieved a change in the level of responsible behaviour of our students? Are there areas that need addressing further? These questions are ongoing ones and will continue to be addressed by both students and teachers.

What I can say, with strong conviction, is that there is a willingness on the part of the students to seek change in this area. Students are now far more aware of the need and place of responsibility in life. We will continue to work towards developing a sense of personal responsibility in our students thereby equipping them with a value that will be lifelong learning.

Madeleine Fernandes, St Gregory's School, Doncaster

Darebin Cluster: Values Curriculum and Human Rights

In one of the Darebin schools, the Student Action Team approach has been used as a whole of class approach. Here the teacher involved reflects on outcomes from the processes she has used within her class:

Our SAT at NSC is our whole Year 9 Communication and Ideas class. There are about 18 students who regularly attend this class. I have this class for 400 minutes every week, and they are a pretty happy bunch of young adults. They like me and each other which helps a lot. I chose to imbue the Values Education project within the existing curriculum structure, which has Year 9 students investigating issues surrounding human rights and the stories of asylum seekers for a semester. As one of the students replies on the first day I introduced the idea of interrogating values alongside of this content: "well human rights are all about having good values." So off we set!

Agreeing on the values we thought were most important was relatively easy. The students identified freedom; care and compassion; and friendship, understanding and **acceptance** (stressed here because after discussion students determined that they did not like the word 'tolerance') as the three values that they thought were most important in their own lives. Through their studies they have also identified these as issues of paramount importance for refugee and asylum seekers, and as fundamentally underpinning the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. As a classroom teacher of 15 year olds, I realised that I had to hook the 'values thing' into a broader set of social justice issues. They certainly would not have bought a 'value of the week' approach.

Tuning in

I stumbled upon a terrific movie called *The Freedom Writers* and it has been the most wonderful touchstone for our examination of values this year. It is about a pretty hardened group of students in an English classroom, somewhere in the US. The students and their surrounding community have a pretty low opinion of them as decent, valuable and productive young people. Many of the kids at NSC similarly labour under the burden of the 'Northland' name and reputation and find it exceptionally difficult to empower themselves to move beyond the stereotypes that their peers at other schools (and similarly the members of local community) may have of them.

This film got them thinking differently about themselves – their values, attitudes, beliefs and prejudices. It was the perfect launch pad. A key motif in the film is a journal – the place of

personal exploration and discovery. I was secretly hoping that my kids would also see the value in this, but there was no way I was going to push them into such an undertaking. To my absolute delight they demanded their own journals (only four of them said they didn't want one), and journaling has become a regular feature of our daily session. We do 15 to 20 minutes at the beginning of each 100 minute session. They can write about anything, but often use the Values and Attributes cards as impetus, or write in response to a media based discussion that we have had re human rights/values. They can flag whether I have permission to read it, and the four students initially reluctant to write are using it for different purposes eg keeping a graphic journal. All students seem to enjoy the quiet and reflective space that the journal has afforded them.

We have attended a wide variety of in/excursions throughout the semester. We have shared meals together at restaurants, journeyed to see the Dalai Lama, watched films, shared music, read together, and undertaken a Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Photography Project. Without a doubt the most powerful experience for the students seems to have been our participation in the Reach Foundation Heroes Day. Here the students were challenged to think and talk about deeper life issues, and two key questions posed by the Reach crew have become another key reference point: *who am I going to be? what am I going to do?* One of the toughest kids in my classroom came to school the day after the event and I hesitantly asked her what she thought of it. "*It's the best thing I have ever done*", she replied. I asked was she taking the piss, and she replied scornfully: "*I bloody told you Maree, it was the best thing I have ever done*". Point made. These questions constantly inform or inspire our discussion and debate and help the students reflect on their own involvement and relationship with broader social justice issues.

Restorative practice and circle time have also become regular tools of engagement and exploration. Students are encouraged to discuss behavioural issues, rules, or code of conduct, and determine restorative actions/consequences for their peers. This has had a huge impact on the development of their emotional literacy, and awareness of their own value systems. (Maree O'Connor)

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Our central research focus and question in the Darebin Cluster is how the Student Action Team approach, as an exemplar of **productive pedagogical practice**, may be applied effectively to teaching and learning in a quality values education program. In other words, what evidence is there that the SAT approach may be a powerful pedagogy for supporting values learning?

There are, of course, several important issues subsumed in this larger question. For example, what does a quality values education program look like? What are the indicators of successful student learning? What does it mean to be *values competent* or *values literate* in our society? Are there evidence-based models or strategies demonstrably effective in promoting values education? What are the key pedagogical principles and practices underpinning the SAT approach?

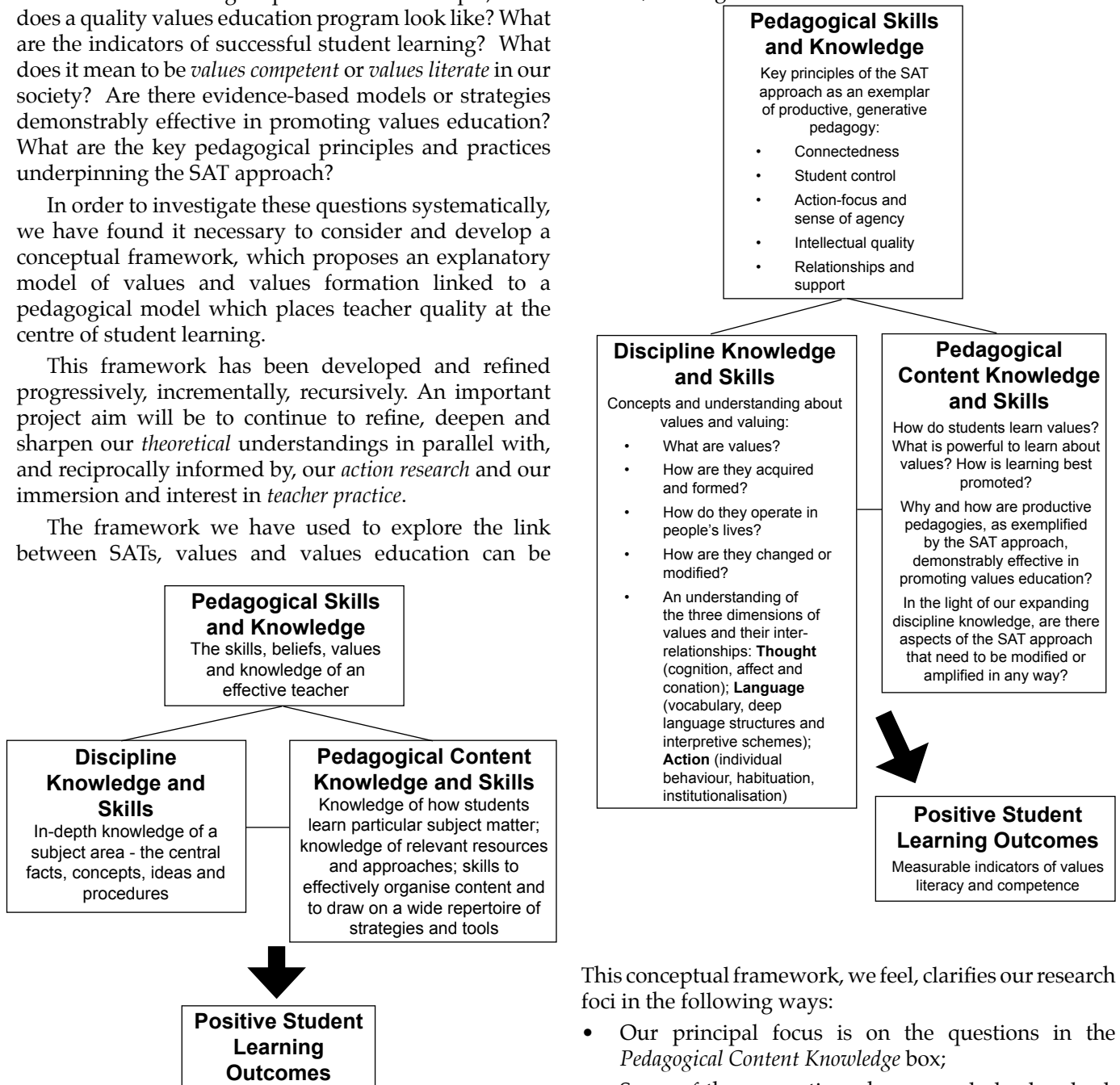
In order to investigate these questions systematically, we have found it necessary to consider and develop a conceptual framework, which proposes an explanatory model of values and values formation linked to a pedagogical model which places teacher quality at the centre of student learning.

This framework has been developed and refined progressively, incrementally, recursively. An important project aim will be to continue to refine, deepen and sharpen our *theoretical* understandings in parallel with, and reciprocally informed by, our *action research* and our immersion and interest in *teacher practice*.

The framework we have used to explore the link between SATs, values and values education can be

(Discipline knowledge); skills and knowledge in the principles of effective teaching and learning (Pedagogical knowledge); and thirdly, a knowledge of how students learn a specific subject area together with skills and practices that support such learning (Pedagogical Content knowledge).

In the diagram below, we apply this conceptual framework to our research question to analyse and explore the relationships between the SAT approach, values, valuing and values education:



conceptualised as a triad:

This model places teacher quality at the centre of student learning. In line with current thinking, the framework asserts that in order to be effective, teachers need: a deep understanding of their subject area

This conceptual framework, we feel, clarifies our research foci in the following ways:

- Our principal focus is on the questions in the *Pedagogical Content Knowledge* box;
- Some of those questions, however, do lead us back to the *Pedagogical Skills and Knowledge* box, to re-examine SAT methodology, explicating and, at the same time, deepening and extending our knowledge of its core principles and practices;
- While our action research is neither explicitly nor

primarily concerned with investigating issues in the *Discipline Knowledge* box, we have arrived at the (perhaps obvious) conclusion that improved knowledge of the subject matter is indispensable to our investigation into what constitutes powerful *values learning* and how this may be best promoted through SAT approaches.

Now we attempt to put forward our current, and rather tentative, understandings and ideas underpinning the conceptual model. Our intention is to return to these throughout the project, looking for evidence which may either support or refute our propositions.

Pedagogical Skills and Knowledge

We assert that the SAT approach is an exemplar of productive pedagogy. Previous research - including our own, which has been documented in the publication, *Student Action Teams: Implementing Productive Practices in Primary and Secondary School Classrooms*, R Holdsworth (ed) 2006 – have highlighted the following essential ingredients of a SAT approach (these are not exclusive to such an approach but, perhaps in combination, they are?):

- ***Connectedness*** means engaging learners with real world ideas, issues and problems that young people see as important for them now and in the future. It means valuing and building on student knowledge and experience and recognising they can make important decisions about issues of importance to them and their community. SAT learning experiences are seen as authentic, real and worthwhile.
- ***Student Control*** refers to students taking a high level of responsibility and direction for their learning; to building in students a sense of personal competence, self-motivation, independence and interdependence. SATs promote student choice of topic, of research outcomes, methodology, follow-up actions, and of course, whether indeed they take up the issue in the first place. Teacher supportive joint practices and scaffolding techniques are used to empower and guide students through all stages of the process.
- ***Action Focus and Sense of Agency*** is the action edge to *Connectedness*. What we mean by this, is that *Connectedness* is more than just real-life education, but must also enable students to be more connected to a participatory social vision and active citizenship. Participation in a SAT entails a sense of making a difference in the real world, a commitment to making a valued and valuable contribution to others.
- ***Intellectual Quality*** refers to the important principle of building higher order thinking and deep knowledge and understandings rather than focusing only on the mere recital of fragmentary bits of information. It is about seeing knowledge as problematic. SATs employ an action research methodology. They engage in activities which challenge students to think, explore, question, problem-solve and discuss. Students are supported to develop reflective practices and meta-cognitive skills.
- ***Relationships and Support*** refers to the importance

of social bonding, interdependence and teamwork in enhancing student engagement and achievement. In SAT approaches, students are invited to form and work as part of a team on an identified issue. They are further supported by positive relationships with their teacher, school and community.

Discipline Knowledge

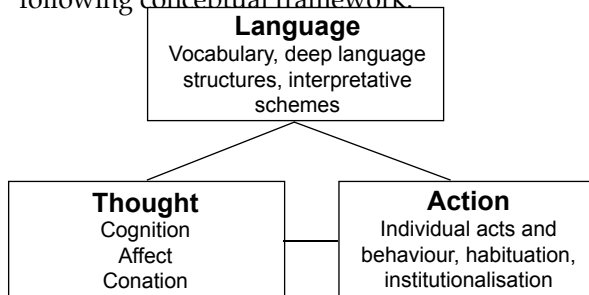
For our - still inchoate - knowledge of this area we are deeply indebted to Dr P G Johnson of Melbourne University. In particular, we acknowledge the importance to our work of his doctoral thesis: *A Metacognitive-Affective Approach to Values Education* (February 2002). Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 6 and our professional conversations with Dr Johnson about these, have been particularly helpful. The publication: *Values Education and Quality Teaching: the Double Helix Effect* (2007) edited by T Lovat and R Toomey was also a valuable resource.

We have concluded that, while 'experts' often differ on values terminology, taxonomies and theories, there are certain core ideas, on which there is a reasonable degree of consensus and which seem to us to be particularly pertinent to our research project:

- Values are part of our belief systems; they can be described and classified as relatively explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious, abstract-concrete, conventional/procedural – substantive/terminal/moral, stable-changeable, etc;
- A person's values consist of a mixture of attitudes, preferential beliefs and, at the top of the pyramid, a small number of relatively abstract higher order values;
- Values have cognitive, affective and conative elements. Emotions and feelings (Affect) are "*the glue*" which hold our values together (Johnson, 2002);
- Values formation seems to proceed through overlapping developmental stages from early childhood through to adulthood, although there is some disagreement about what these may be. An important issue is the role of primary group socialisation in developing values which have strong emotional intensity. Values associated with self identity also carry greater emotional strength;
- Values need to be understood as both a noun (a thing, concept, belief) and a verb – valuing (a process);
- The notion of *values as process* is of great interest to our research into values education, because we place less emphasis on values education as concerned with inculcating a **list** of values and more on empowering students to be competent users, interpreters and constructors of values. Focusing on **process** draws our attention to such issues as: how values are acquired, developed, chosen, constructed, modified, interpreted, apprehended, enacted; in short, how values are talked about and used in practical, everyday life situations;
- The dualistic nature of values: they appear almost simultaneously to be both *Given* (externalised social meanings which we perceive and understand) **and** *Constructed* (problematic meanings which

we interpret and construct). Some theorists refer to this recursive, dialectical relationship between *Understanding* and *Interpretation* as the hermeneutic spiral;

- This is connected to the idea that values therefore have social and personal (self, identity, etc) dimensions and function;
- To fully understand *values as process*, we utilise the following conceptual framework:



Values appear to us as 'phenomenon' in these three dimensions. They are perceived, apprehended and constructed in thought, language and action. Indeed, values formation, socialisation, clarification, modification and education occur through a complex interaction between thought (particularly the interplay of affect and cognition), language and action. This is a crucial idea which is of pivotal interest to our research;

- This framework suggests that all values learning and development is a complex process, in which an individual not only draws on a tool-kit of developmentally appropriate language, meta-language and meta-cognitive skills to choose, construct, clarify, evaluate, refer to and modify their

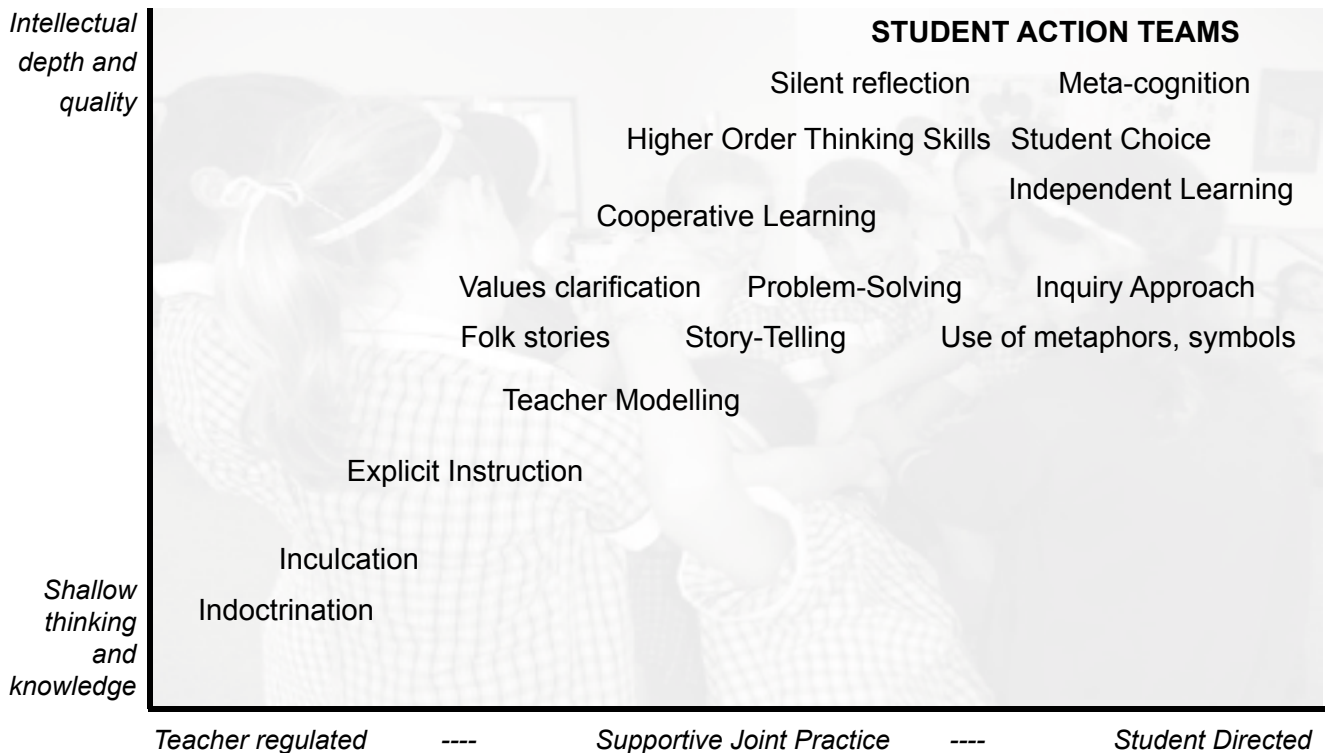
values, but also, learns values by 'trying them out' in practice. Doing or enacting values as well as observing and talking about values in action need to be critical parts of a balanced values education program. Such a program aims to further refine and enhance this tool-kit of skills, concepts and understandings (eg inquiry, meta-cognition).

Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills

As this is the principal focus of our research, of course, at this stage, we pose more questions than we are able to forward explanations.

- Firstly, how do students learn values? What is powerful to learn about values? How is learning best promoted? Our literature review and conceptual framework suggest some tentative directions for inquiry. There are, at least, four important ideas we would need to take account of in our action research:
 - » the problematic, constructed nature of values;
 - » the emotional-rational-volitional dimensions of values: the emotional glue in values;
 - » values as a process, not just a 'list' of words: a complex interplay between language-thought (affect, cognition, conation) – action in values learning, development and practice;
 - » the roles of language, meta-language, meta-cognition, inquiry and action in values education;
- Secondly, why and how are productive pedagogies, as exemplified by the SAT approach, demonstrably effective in promoting values learning?





A Typology of Teaching and Learning Strategies for Values Education

This schema (above) shows that in terms of the array of teaching and learning strategies available to the teacher of values education, our concern is with investigating those located in the top right-hand corner of the table, while, at the same time, recognising the importance of supportive joint practices for scaffolding student learning.

At this stage of the project, we could claim to have developed only a tentative working hypothesis: that the SAT approach, founded on the five principles of *connectedness, student control, action focus and sense of agency, intellectual quality and relationships and support*, is a powerful pedagogy for values education because it is entirely consistent with how we learn and use values in the real world. We will also argue that the SAT's approach can produce significant rather than superficial learning outcomes, where students become literate, competent value users, capable of reflecting on, analysing, modifying and enacting values in real-life situations and equipped to *question and create the kind of future they want* (Brendan Nelson).

Geoff Jones and Merryn Davies

Contact:

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Sue Cahill is the coordinator of the **Manningham** Cluster Values Education Student Action Team Project. Contact Sue at: scahill@stcharls.melb.catholic.edu.au



The Student Action Teams Manual from the Victorian Department of Education: still available at:
www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/curricman/middleyear/StudentActionTeamsManual2003.pdf

Engaging targeted students through student leadership

A Student Action Teams project is underway at a very multicultural high school in South Western Sydney with an Intensive English Centre (IEC) attached. The students who are participating in the SAT are ex IEC students, current IEC students who will soon exit into the HS and other students who are interested.

Targeted students have formed a Student Action Team. This team has collaborated with staff mentors to identify areas for investigation or for further development in their school community, and then has developed and is now implementing an action plan to address one of these areas. The exact focus of the project has been determined in negotiation with the student leaders.

Students were asked to identify issues associated with improving the transition from the IEC to High School. They identified a range of issues that covered school culture, school systems and information processes. They then went through a process to narrow the focus into something that was 'do-able'. Their current aim is to create an information DVD for IEC students about High School. This product will feature the SAT members as narrators as well as staff and other students in a variety of locations.

Support for the project aims to assist schools to proactively engage high school students from specific cultural groups that are under-represented in traditional student leadership structures. Students include those from 'emerging' cultural communities in schools, for example, students who have exited an Intensive English Centre and who are a minority group in high school.

As well as the practical measures and changes introduced by the students, it is anticipated that there will also be project outcomes for individual students and the school:

- Increased numbers of targeted students engaged in student leadership activities;
- Development of self-confidence and student leadership skills in targeted students; and
- Improved connections between the targeted group and the school community, in particular other students and staff.

A full report of this project will be presented in a future issue of *Connect*.

For more information at the moment, contact Noel Grannall at the NSW Department of Education: (02) 9266 8091 or noel.grannall@det.nsw.edu.au



ISBN: 978-0-9803133-2-1

Student Action Teams:

Implementing Productive Practices in Primary and Secondary School Classrooms

Student Action Teams - teams of students who, as part of their school curriculum, adopt a community issue that they care passionately about, research it, decide what needs to be changed or improved and take action to achieve that.

In this book (April 2006) primary and secondary schools in Melbourne's northern suburbs tell how to establish and implement **Student Action Teams**. They describe their students' work researching and acting around *traffic safety* and the *environment* and reflect on what they have learnt: the basic principles of **Student Action Teams**, their practical operation, and the stories of successful approaches and outcomes in two projects. The principles and approaches outlined here can be used to guide developments in any school - acting alone or in a cluster. Includes sample worksheets and proformas; Noel Grannall (above) has commented on the usefulness of 'The Big Plan' on page 83!

Order NOW from **Connect**: \$33 or \$27.50 for **Connect** subscribers.

Student Leadership Council

The Student Leaders at Aldercourt Primary School in Frankston North have been working hard throughout 2007.

The year began with training day with Dave from *Second Strike*. **Mahogany Rise**, our other local neighborhood school, joined us for the day. We learned lots of things like how to run a meeting, and we played many games and ate *Subway* for lunch.

One of the other events that the student leaders organised was '**Aldercourt's Got Talent**'. Students would entertain us by performing acts like singing, dancing and comedy at our weekly assemblies.

Another event was '**Kids Rule the School Day**' for Education Week. We played educational games like treasure hunt, bubble blowing and much more.

We have some other great events planned for the rest of the year such as our disco for the whole school. I've had lots of fun throughout the year, with looking after students, having fun events and mostly being a student leader at Aldercourt.

Ioshabel Pati



For more information please contact:

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Student Councils and Beyond: Students as Effective Participants in Decision-Making

The first **Connect** publication (from 2005) supports effective and relevant participation of students in decision-making in primary and secondary schools.

It brings together a collection of practical ideas and articles about how Student Councils can go beyond tokenism ... and make a difference. Case studies, ideas, worksheets!

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ISBN: 978-0-9803133-1-4



The Making of Student Leaders

Often there is a great deal of debate amongst teachers and students when determining the best model to adopt for students to fully develop and extend their leadership roles and student structure within the college setting.

At Pascoe Vale Girls College in Melbourne, we have over the years tried many different approaches to engaging students in this regard and, to some degree, would argue that we are still in the process of refining our leadership structure and processes although there are many things that have developed an air of tradition and are firmly entrenched in the minds of the students and college community.

Like many Colleges, Pascoe Vale has long held the position of College Captain and, in the foyer of the Admin area, names stretch back for some 50 years. We are indeed still fortunate to have the very first College Captain return to speak to our students on a regular basis.

But things have changed over the years both in terms of how the Captain is selected and what expectations are now placed on the College Captain in a more sophisticated school environment. It goes without saying that in most schools the title of School Captain has enjoyed somewhat a renaissance and carries a degree of prestige in the broader community and in many ways with that goes expectations that the person chosen for this position (irrespective of the process) has definable leadership talents and skills.

Our College, up to about eight years ago, simply followed a process where the College Captain would be selected by her peers and her role would simply be as a figurehead. Her major task might be to address the College (especially the senior school) on a couple of occasions a year and perhaps run an activity such as Year 12 pyjama day or assist the Year Level Co-ordinators with administrative duties.

However, while this position was a prestigious one to have, it didn't really address the bigger issue of student leadership nor did it provide for the student (lucky enough to be voted by her peers) in terms of personal development. There was also the added issue with this process that it could become a popularity contest with really capable kids missing out.

Following on from a couple of years where the chosen Captain proved not entirely up to the task, a decision was made both by Admin and a working party of senior students to look at the selection process in a different way. Both groups had very clear ideas as to what role the College Captain should play and what skills were necessary for the student selected to possess.

Interestingly, just being academic was not seen by either party as being a key selection criteria but rather the need to be able to communicate well, have a grasp of the college and a willingness to empathise with all students and work for the College community became the prized ideals. However, this had to be carefully measured against the student's expectations of academic success and desired future pathway.

With this in mind, the selection process was changed to written application and interview by a panel. While initially drawing a degree of criticism from students and staff alike, the process was trialed and adopted and the process has remained. The Panel, which consists of an Assistant Principal, outgoing College Captain, Head of Sub-school and Head of Student Leadership, follows the process of reading all applications and checking that criteria have been addressed prior to short listing candidates - after which a 25 minute interview takes place.

At the conclusion of the process, the recommended candidate(s) are submitted to the Principal for her final seal of approval. At Senior School, a College Captain and two Deputies are appointed and this tends to spread the load in terms of meeting duties and designated tasks. The Executive, as they have become known, then works with Form Captains in a range of situations and also form the executive of the Young Leaders Forum. In relation to this group, they then extend their Leadership growth through devising and running a special training day for all College leaders. Their focus throughout the year then becomes involvement in devising activities and events for each of the sub-schools.

One key feature of this process is the development of the Captains as young leaders. A clear example of skill building is in their involvement as participants in the Lions Youth of the Year Program that enhances public speaking and debate. At the conclusion of

the process in November 2006, the Captains for 2007 were sent to Singapore to join an international conference that was designed to inspire and enhance young women on "a world stage" (see article in *Connect* 164-165, April-June 2007).

Sarah Brunton, the current College Captain says that "the process is terrific in that you get to showcase a number of your talents, whether that be public speaking, organisation or simply to think on your feet, as a leader would be expected to do when something comes from left field". Sarah goes on to say that "the process is a vital link in preparing you for the job ahead and that the pressure of the interview gives you an indication as to whether you are really cut out for the position".

This process has now been used for several years and appears to work well, so much so that it has been adopted at Junior and Middle schools where College Captains are appointed and work as Executive members to run Form Captain meetings and special events. The process has given students a leading edge in terms of interview technique and rarely does any student hesitate or shy away from the challenge presented.

Leadership growth doesn't finish here. Once the positions of College Captains are filled, the student body has the opportunity to stand for the positions of Form Captain and the Young Leaders Forum. Again applications are called for but the emphasis changes, in the case of Form Captains, to an application and student election which is carried out early in the new school term. Young Leaders submit an application and are interviewed by the Senior College Captains and Head of Student Development, whose job it is to co-ordinate this group over the course of the year. Like all schools, Pascoe Vale has Sports Captains for inter-College Competitions and these students come directly from the VCE Phys Ed Class where four students are allocated to each of the Houses. The decision to incorporate the VCE students in this way was a logical extension of their enthusiasm and drive to involve the students in

physical activity such as the Swimming and Athletic sports.

The College is keen to celebrate the talents of our Young Leaders and this is formally achieved through an Induction Evening which is held at the Moonee Ponds Clock Tower Theatre towards late February. Here all Student Leaders are presented to the College community and this then sets the tone for the College year.

Pascoe Vale readily acknowledges that there is a need to invest in their young leaders and formally acknowledge the wealth of talent that comes with youth and enthusiasm. It is the work done in building resilience that pays off in the long run, especially in creating opportunities for students to develop and grow as a result. Leadership at the college is part of a unique Program called 'Step up, Step out' and creates some 250 separate opportunities for students to be engaged in extra-curriculum activities.

In terms of developing your program, it doesn't matter what process you choose to follow; you have to be guided by your own traditions and conventions and listen to the students because somewhere within, you will find a solution and best practice. Leadership is never 'static': it's something that is highly dynamic and ever changing.

Michael Walton

Michael is Head of Student Development and Welfare at Pascoe Vale Girls College and can be contacted by email: wal@pvgc.vic.edu.au



Pascoe Vale Girls Leadership Day: Student Leadership Team of Monique Burns, Sarah Brunton, Emma McIntosh and Hailey Hobbs with Pat Ryan, YMCA Youth Governor and Gemma Purdy, singer and star of X Factor

Milestone for SRC leaders

By AMI DOSHI

This year is a milestone for student representative councils in NSW public schools. In August, the NSW State SRC Conference, the major student leadership conference supported by the NSW Department of Education and Training, celebrated its 20th anniversary.

The theme of the conference was *Get Connected – Take Action!* For me “Get Connected” means to eliminate barriers for students—that is, student to student, student to teacher and between the school and the community. Connections between students and teachers are important because a strong relationship helps students to concentrate, enabling them to achieve top grades.

At the 2007 State SRC Conference there were theme workshops, student leadership workshops, keynote presentations and fun and educational activities that filled every minute of the three and a half days.

My favourite workshop was “Cultural Connections”, about the cultural exchange program run by the multicultural programs unit. This program allows students from NSW schools to link up with students in other areas. It opened my eyes to a world that I was not so familiar with and helped me to better accept people who may look different, come from different cultural backgrounds or have different beliefs.

“Rising Generations” was another dynamic and creative workshop which captured the hearts and minds of the conference participants. The workshop presenters were just like us – young, energetic, enthusiastic and cared



Making new friends ... student leaders at the state SRC conference.

Photo: Peter Hutchinson

deeply about making a difference in the wider world.

My favourite activity was “DrumBeats”. On Thursday night, just before the 20th birthday celebration cake was brought out, everyone at the conference was given an African drum to beat. This was something new and different. You should have heard our rhythmic tunes!

The student forum was quite an event. It was a formal debate where student leaders from each region put forward a recommendation for debate. Ten recommendations (one per region) were debated and six resolutions were passed. These will now be handed on to the incoming NSW SRC for action.

The best part of the conference was making new friends. Before I went to the conference, I knew about 10 SRC students from nearby schools but by the end I knew more than 50. Now I have friends in Tooleybuc, Newcastle, Narrabri, Scone, Moruya, Orange, Byron Bay and many other places.

For me, the 2007 State SRC Conference was a great occasion to learn how to lead effectively. I learnt that leadership is not just for

me but that I must use my skills to help improve the quality of life for all students in public schools.

The conference allowed me to experience a new world. It filled me with the inspiration to make a difference and provided me with countless memories I will cherish forever.

The State SRC Conference is more than just a conference. It's a NSW public school tradition. It doesn't just “talk about” student leadership; it demonstrates it in every way. It's an inspiring demonstration of student leaders in action. It's a conference run by students for students ... and this is where the other part of the conference theme comes in – “Take Action!” is a key aspect of student leadership.

For more information about the department's student leadership programs and resources, go to: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studleadsrc/index.php

E: student.leadership@det.nsw.edu.au

Ami Doshi, a Year 11 student at Randwick Girls Technology High School, was a member of the 2007 State SRC Conference working party.

from *Side by Side*, issue 12, September 2007

2007 NSW SRC REPORT

The 2007 NSW SRC is the Department of Education and Training's peak student leadership consultative and decision making forum and represents secondary students in government secondary schools. It consists of 22 members elected from regions across NSW and includes two Aboriginal student leaders.

The term of office commenced in November 2006 with two days of training followed by the inaugural meeting at NSW Parliament House, Sydney on 24 November. Subsequent meetings were held on 16 February, 27 April and 28 June 2007. The last meeting is 14 September, 2007. Responsibilities for the 2007 NSW SRC conclude when the 2008 NSW SRC is elected.

Many members have represented the Department at special events and activities between meetings. These include:

- *Stand Up, Speak Out!* Anti-Racism Conference, 28 April 2007;
- School Counsellors Training Day, 14 February 2007 ;
- Secondary Principals Conference, 13 June 2007.

The 2007 NSW SRC has worked on resolutions passed at the Student Forum at the 2006 State SRC Conference. Members also have liaison roles with Departmental staff and community organisations with a youth focus.

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE 2006 STATE SRC CONFERENCE: Involved Students - Active Citizens:

Resolution 1

... that the 2007 NSW SRC promotes the implementation of the new MindMatters resource created by the 2006 State SRC for student leaders in all secondary schools.

The resource was approved by the Department of Education and Training in June 2007. The 2006 NSW SRC helped create the resource. The 2007 NSW SRC created a draft flyer to promote the resource (right). Further

ideas for promotion include:

- Sending a letter and a sample copy to student welfare consultants.
- Sending a flyer to schools promoting the resource.
- Asking schools to email **student.leadership@det.nsw.edu.au** for a copy.

Resolution 2

It is recommended that the 2007 NSW SRC develop a multimedia resource that encourages school spirit and assists students to work with their school and local communities.

The 2007 NSW SRC collaborated with the Centre for Learning Innovation to create a five minute promotional DVD. The product is titled *Get Connected-Take Action!* The resource encourages students in schools to build school spirit and get involved in school life.

In June 2007, the NSW SRC toured the facilities at the Centre for Learning Innovation, met with staff and senior executive at the centre, and experimented with

digital technology.

Get Connected-Take Action! was launched at the 2007 State SRC Conference on 31 July 2007. Each student leader at the conference received a copy of the DVD. All student welfare consultants were sent a copy to help them promote student leadership activities in schools. It is hoped the resource will soon be made available on the student leadership website www.schools.nsw.edu.au/src with a link to the parents' portal of TaLe and a link to the students' email log-on page.

NSW SRC members have volunteered to present a workshop about their involvement in the creation of the resource at the *Connected Learning* Conference to be held in Sydney in October 2007.

Resolution 3

It is recommended that the 2007 NSW SRC work towards a mandatory driver awareness and road safety course in schools.

The 2007 NSW SRC consulted with Mr Alan Booth, Manager, Road Safety Education, Ms Lisa Hammond, Road Safety Education Consultant – Hunter/ Central Coast Region, and Ms Melinda Tsoupis, project officer investigating road safety.

NSW SRC learnt that road safety education is already mandatory in NSW public schools as part of the PD/H/PE curriculum. Some schools have a driver education course, but currently it is not mandatory. Driver Education is mostly taught in year 11 and many students can drive at this



stage.

The NSW SRC discussed whether Year 10 might be a more appropriate time for driver education to be held. Other discussions were held on whether a driver education course could be run after the School Certificate, whether any currently available driver education courses could become mandatory and whether a road safety unit could be introduced into *Crossroads*. The NSW SRC gave input into draft modules on road safety education. These modules may be suitable for inclusion in *Crossroads* in the future.

Resolution 4

It is recommended that the 2007 NSW SRC creates a resource to support and promote the undertaking of rural-city exchange programs within schools.

The 2007 NSW SRC consulted with staff from the Multicultural Programs Unit and decided to support the existing cultural exchange website: www.culturalexchange.nsw.edu.au. This option was preferred to any attempt to create a similar SRC student exchange program.

The NSW SRC created a brochure for inclusion on the cultural exchange website (below) and made suggestions to improve the website. The Multicultural Programs Unit was also invited to provide a workshop on the cultural exchange program at the 2007 State SRC Conference. This workshop was highly evaluated.

The NSW SRC encourages students in all schools to get involved in the cultural exchange program as it's a great way for students to learn about others and promote tolerance,



inclusion and diversity in schools.

Resolution 5

It is recommended that the 2007 NSW SRC lobby the Federal Education Minister and Federal Government to review the means test for students who have to live away from home accessing university. That this review increases the incentive for students to go straight from year 12 to university study. This review should be concluded by the end of 2007.

The 2007 NSW SRC considered this resolution for a long time. This resolution asked the NSW SRC to take action to improve circumstances for post-school aged students who wished to go to university but who were ineligible for financial assistance through student assistance schemes. The aim of the NSW SRC however is *'to improve the quality of school life for all students'*.

The NSW SRC decided that the role of the NSW SRC is to help all students in all schools and this resolution dealt with a very specific group of young adults. The NSW SRC researched the topic in depth and discovered that the means test was actually reviewed in late 2006. A letter was sent to the Federal Education Minister

and a reply has been received.

ENVIRO INSPIRO! 2007

The 2007 NSW SRC conducted the student-led school environment competition: **Enviro Inspiro!** for the second consecutive year. Interest grew substantially from the first year of the competition and there was a noted increase in entries. Sixteen secondary schools entered the competition including a school in a Juvenile Justice Centre. In July 2007, three NSW SRC members participated in the judging panel. The standard of entries was high and the winning entries were showcased at the 2007 State SRC Conference.

CONSULTATIONS WITH 2007 NSW SRC:

Forum of students with senior Department of Education and Training Officers:

In November 2006, the 2007 NSW SRC met with senior officers of the Department. The guests worked with the 2007 NSW SRC members and discussed the resolutions passed at the 2006 State SRC Conference.

Two forums per year will continue to be held between the NSW SRC and senior officers of the Department – one at the commencement of the term of office of the term of office, the other at the completion of the term of office.

Other consultations with the 2007 NSW SRC are detailed in the full report of the 2007 NSW State SRC (available from *Connect* - see page





Change and Switch

Change And Switch (C&S) is a global organisation, based in Melbourne, and led by secondary student **Linh Do**. The organisation currently deals with environmental issues on a global scale, with sub-campaigns ranging from switching incandescent light bulbs into fluorescent bulbs to converting entire schools or companies to green power. Unlike most environmental organisations, **Change And Switch** widens itself to include social justice causes, such as discrimination and equal rights.

Although under the direction of a 16 year old, the organisation is not entirely youth run, with volunteers over the age of 26. 'I don't think global warming or social justice is just a youth issue; it's a global issue that everyone needs to work on, not just certain sectors of the community,' said Ms Do. **Change And Switch** believes that, for any change to occur, whether on a community or global level, people of all different walks of life need to work harmoniously together.



Change And Switch operates on a volunteer basis and is always on the look out for people of all ages and skills who are interested in volunteering their time. Volunteer jobs can vary from administrative work to programming; requirements can be tailored to suit the individual.

For more information visit their website: www.changeandswitch.org

If you are interested in volunteering with any sector of **Change And Switch** or have comments, please contact : Linh Do (Director, C&S) at: linh.m.do@gmail.com or 0413 706 032

Reaching High: A Program Promoting Positive Approaches to Learning Differences

Reaching High tells the story of 14 years' work around literacy in north central Victoria. Student participatory approaches are central to a program that caters for students with learning differences, with an annual student-run three-day **regional camp** as the culmination of that program. This camp brings in **adult role models** who have, or have had, learning differences, to act as mentors for students. Past student participants now also act as leaders, adult role models and assistants.



This inspiring and exciting 120-page book documents the development and operation of the **Reaching High Program**. It outlines the theory and community links behind the program, and how it is built on the active and strength-based participation of students. Includes a DVD of practical ideas.

First published by **Connect** in December 2006;
ISBN: 978-0-9803133-0-7

Order now: \$33 each
(\$27.50 for **Connect** subscribers)

VicSRC State Congress 2007 ... and Beyond!



The VicSRC Congress was a great start to our year. It was on Friday 18th of May and was held at the Collingwood Town Hall. It was a busy morning doing workshops of our choice and finding out that the issues affecting our school... were other students' as well. It was great to hear everyone's thoughts and ideas and I think we achieved heaps. We would discuss the issue, find a solution/s and then write up a motion to carry out the solution. There were also teacher workshops on at the same time.

We had a visit from the Education Minister John Lenders, who talked to the students at the Congress and looked at what was being done at the workshops. He was interviewed by a member of the Exec and we learnt that he was also on the SRC at his school when he was our age. It definitely showed us the skills you learn from being on SRC, and how they can help you later in life.

We had the formal Congress in the afternoon and the motions from the workshops were presented for everyone to vote on. We had so many motions (41) from the workshops that we didn't get through them all! It was a very official process, with lots of different people getting a say on the motions and there were some quite interesting discussions, particularly regarding school uniforms. The motions that were passed are listed in the report opposite.

Nineteen students stood for the 2007-08 VicSRC Executive and were all elected. For more information see their names in the report. The Executive has now set up six committees to work on the following issues: **Environment, Curriculum, Helping SRCs, Communication, Website and Newsletter**. These committees are open to any interested students. Contact the VicSRC if you want to get involved.

Thank you to everyone who came!

Ashlee Frye
and Emma Lewis
(for VicSRC)



The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) is a statewide network of Victorian secondary school students. The VicSRC is supported by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the Congress was made possible by grants from the Donkey Wheel Foundation and the Reichstein Foundation.

The VicSRC aims to:

- Strengthen SRCs;
- Be a representative body for Victorian secondary school students;
- Facilitate and co-ordinate action by secondary students at all levels;
- Be democratic and participatory.



The Second VicSRC Congress

The Second VicSRC Congress was held on Friday 18th May, 2007 at Collingwood Town Hall. This Congress aimed to provide an opportunity for students to raise issues of concern to them and propose ways of addressing them. The resolutions of the Congress become the agenda for the VicSRC. The Congress also provided an opportunity for students to elect a group of their peers to enact this agenda on their behalf.

In addition, the Congress offered:

- wide ranging discussions on how to strengthen student councils;
- networking opportunities; and
- opportunity to stand for election to the student executive.

Organising the Congress

The Congress was planned and run by the VicSRC's Interim Student Executive. Information about the Congress was sent to SRCs and support staff in all Victorian secondary schools. SRCs were each invited to nominate two student representatives to attend the Congress, to discuss the nature of issues they wished to raise.

The suggestions from SRCs (and other student representative bodies) about topics of interest formed the agenda for the Congress. Topics for discussion fell within three areas:

- SRC Issues;
- School-based issues; and
- Community Issues.

The Congress Process

The Congress was attended by over 100 student participants from 42 Victorian schools.

In the morning two workshop sessions were held on the following issues identified by students in the lead up to the Congress.

Session 1: School and Community Issues

- School uniforms
- Safety in and around schools
- Students' rights
- Canteen food and healthy choices
- Saving water in schools
- Climate change and energy conservation in schools
- Recycling at school
- Bullying
- Use of technology in schools
- Young people's personal wellbeing

Session 2: SRC Issues

- Getting support and recognition for the SRC;
- Organising school activities;
- Giving country youth a voice;
- Planning for VicSRC Online Forum;
- Going beyond fundraising;
- Working with other SRCs in clusters to organise events;
- Increasing student participation in SRC events;
- Staff support for SRCs;
- Implementing student-led ideas and initiatives;
- Working with the school principal.

Workshops in session 2 were visited by Victorian Education Minister John Lenders and students had the opportunity to directly express their views to him.

In the afternoon, a formal parliamentary style Congress was convened and students debated and voted the proposals submitted from the workshops. This Congress session was chaired by Georgie Ferrari, Executive Officer of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. Movers of motions were allowed two minutes to speak to the proposals, and this was followed by questions of clarification, and discussion on the proposals. Finally, each motion was formally put to a vote. Proposals that couldn't be considered within the time limits have been referred to the VicSRC Executive for consideration and action.

At the conclusion of the Congress students elected 20 of their peers to the VicSRC Student Executive.

Congress Proceedings:

Motions Passed

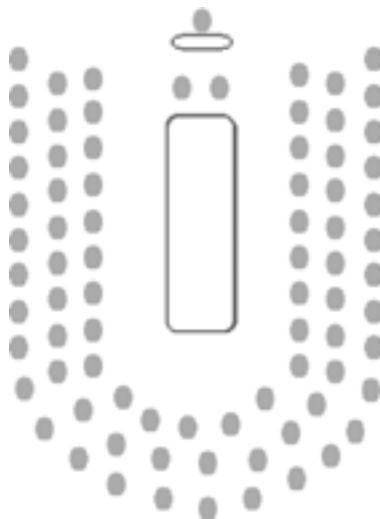
The VicSRC Congress considered 13 motions and agreed to the following eight:

1. That the VicSRC Congress be an annual event.

Points for: An annual congress would ensure that the VicSRC was more up-to-date, and that it was easier to act on initiatives.

Points against: The congress should be every two years, as there is too much involved in hosting an annual event, and it would take too much time out of the VicSRC's year, so that they can't get anything else done.

2. That recycling bins are to be provided by the local council and they are to be placed next to garbage bins within the school and that the VicSRC



investigate and recommend a process for doing so.

Points for: Recycling bins should be put next to normal bins for ease of access, so that every bin is near a recycling bin.

Question: 'What is the guarantee that recycling bins are actually recycled?' *Answer:* Schools would organise this with individual contractors.

- 3. That the VicSRC create an information pack (which also includes a DVD) in regard to water saving and recycling techniques to provide schools in Victoria with information to heighten awareness of water saving and recycling techniques.**

Points for: These are important issues for schools.

Points against: This already occurs in schools. This should not be the concern of the VicSRC, but of individual students.

- 4. That school uniform policy be decided (or at least approved) by the student body and the SRC before implementation.**

Points for: A coherent uniform policy, designed and approved of by students, is needed across schools. Many current uniform policies are bad. A coherent policy will ensure that students are comfortable, and student interests are represented.

- 5. That there be an increase in raising awareness and gaining funding for the implementation of student welfare workers in schools so as to alleviate pressure and stress in schools, particularly in the VCE.**

Points for: Students need to be more aware of the pressures, and funding for welfare and awareness programs will help this. This is a problem despite existing government funding. We can help more and it is our job to do so. Helping truants is the very purpose of the welfare. It would assist in student engagement at school. There is nothing more important than students' wellbeing.

Points against: This has already occurred in many schools. Most students aren't there to benefit from the program – they are wagging, so how can we benefit them? More important things will be lost while funding these ideas. Students should help themselves, not rely on the government for assistance.

Question: What form would this take? *Answer:* Chaplains would be available at all times, study groups, etc.

- 6. That the VicSRC lobby for a whole school policy for all Victorian schools to educate their students in the conservation of energy and to set an example in saving energy.**

Question: What is meant by setting examples? *Answer:* Teachers could, for instance, turn lights and appliances off every day.

- 7. That the newly elected VicSRC Executive be accepted.**

- 8. That the VicSRC Executive establishes processes and rules regarding quorum at VicSRC Congress.**

Other Proposals

Five further motions - around rights of students, uniforms, internet censorship, School Councils and rewards for SRC members - were also considered and debated, but not agreed to. Many other motions under the headings 'Role of SRCs', 'Teacher Support', 'Uniforms', 'Student Rights', 'Canteens', 'Technology' and 'Miscellaneous' were proposed from the workshops and from schools, but were not considered because of lack of time. These have been referred to the Executive for consideration.



VicSRC Executive 2007-2008

The following students were elected to the VicSRC Executive. They have responsibility for oversight of the VicSRC and the implementation of resolutions from this Congress. Their term will expire at the next Congress to be held in 2008.

Amal I	Year 8, Macleod College
Andrew L	Year 11, Collingwood College
Ashlee F	Year 9, Eaglehawk SC
Doug F	Year 10, Frankston High School
Emma L	Year 9, Eaglehawk SC
Gemeda A	Year 11, Roxburgh College
Georgia K	Year 9, University High School
James O	Year 11, Wanganui Park SC
Kate M	Year 8, Methodist Ladies College
Kate S	Year 8, Methodist Ladies College
Kera B	Year 11, Northland Secondary College
Linh D	Year 11, Braybrook College
Maki I	Year 10, Debney Park SC
Monica L	Year 11, St Albans Secondary College
Nicole M	Year 8, Melbourne Girls College
Rachel M	Year 11, East Doncaster SC
Sarah C	Year 11, Macleod College
Sarah G	Year 11, Pakenham Secondary College
Shadi Q	Year 7, Caroline Chisholm Catholic College
Stacey W	Year 11, Yarram Secondary College

VicSRC Clusters

Several VicSRC Clusters had their first meetings in term 2, 2007. Three schools in Bendigo came together for a joint training day on April 19th and held a brief cluster meeting at the end of the day. Other schools in Bendigo have expressed interest in joining and a meeting date is being planned.

Four schools from the Shire of Wellington met in Sale on May 15th. They are planning a shire festival and investigating the possibility of a joint program to tackle bullying.

Three schools in Whittlesea met on the 28th May and began swapping ideas for SRC projects. They have the opportunity to act as a student consultation group for a local youth and community hub being built in their area.

Six schools in Hume met on the 29th of May – the biggest cluster meeting so far. They are planning school exchange days where SRC representatives visit each other's school to see how other schools and SRCs operate.

Six schools also continue to participate in the Banyule DART Board. They are planning to hold a referendum of Banyule students on whether the voting age should be lowered.

VicSRC at Victorian Parliamentary Education and Training Committee's Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools

The VicSRC presented a submission to the recent parliamentary inquiry into school uniforms and school dress codes across Victoria that was held from the 30th April until the 6th September this year.

This Victorian inquiry was bought about as a result of a submission to the parliament and hopes to bring a clearer understanding to the Victorian Parliament on the following issues:

- the benefits and costs of mandatory school uniforms;
- the views of school communities about dress codes and school uniforms;
- the most cost efficient and practical uniform procurement arrangements;
- matters which need to be considered to ensure dress codes and uniform policies

are consistent with anti-discrimination legislation and health promotion policies;

- appropriate enforcement and sanctions;
- appropriate exemption criteria and processes; and
- national and international trends.

The VicSRC's submission to this inquiry dealt with many of the above issues given that the issue of school uniforms was discussed at the previously held VicSRC congress.

The VicSRC considered this as an excellent opportunity to represent students on the issue of school dress codes and uniform and hopes that the inquiry will respond positively to the content provided by the VicSRC.

The Inquiry's report is expected to be released by no later than 31st of March 2008.

Doug Flakemore (for VicSRC)

Need more information about the VicSRC??

Then get on the web and log into www.yacvic.org.au/vicsrc/news/ where you will find current information, and news that might be interesting for your school's SRC. So get on and have a look.

But if you want a say on issues, you can at www.yacvic.org.au/vicsrc/phpBB2/ which is VicSRC's online forum. Register to use it (which is free). Please remember not to have any unacceptable language, as anyone can access it.

And.....

For all those people who only use myspace, VicSRC has a myspace page; just go to www.myspace.com/vicsrc

Do you have an SRC Webpage?

Some SRCs have asked the VicSRC for information about individual SRC web sites or web pages. We would be interested to put a link to your SRC web page from the VicSRC web pages. (We would also be interested for you to include a link to the VicSRC site on your webpage.) Email the URL of your SRC web page to us:

vicsrc@yacvic.org.au

You could also tell us about any links to other sites you have found useful.



The VicSRC is based at the **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic)** and can be reached there on **03 9267 3744** or toll-free from outside Melbourne on **1300 727 176** or by e-mail: vicsrc@yacvic.org.au



Student Voice: A historical perspective and new directions

At the last State election, the Victorian Government made commitments around **Student Voice**. They committed to “promote effective models for student participation and representation in schools such as Student Representative Councils” and to “identify and promote opportunities for greater student participation in School Councils”. Within this context, the Department of Education issued this paper in April 2007 tracing the historical and conceptual roots of Student Voice, and providing some examples from around Australia and internationally.

The main focus of the paper is on student voice as a contribution to student learning and engagement rather than on voice or participation as a ‘right’ (see *Connect* 164-165, 2007); however it also acknowledges that ideas of empowerment have been crucial to the concept’s development. The ‘tension’ between different understandings of student voice - supporting student voice to inform decision making by others - consultation (a ‘minimalist’ view of student voice), versus seeing voice as part of the empowerment of students to take action over their lives - is mentioned but not fully explored. On the one hand: “Students want to understand why things are done as they are and would like to voice their views about change and to have those views heard.” (p 6; citing Fielding and Ruddock); on the other: “Student outcomes will improve and school reform will be more successful if students actively participate in shaping it.” (citing Mitra) However this runs underneath much of the discussion and through the ways we then think about the examples provided.

Other dimensions or dilemmas, such as that of ‘collaborative student voice’ versus ‘personalised or individualised student

voice’ also bubble along there, but are not really teased out.

The literature summary addresses: ‘Why engage student voice?’, ‘The use and promotion of student voice’, ‘Student voice and school engagement’ and ‘Student voice and whole school improvement’. It makes some reference to critical issues within the student voice literature, particularly the questions articulated by Michael Fielding; however there has been much more work done around these issues (both here in Australia and internationally - both at a theoretical and a practical level), exploring some answers to the questions raised about ‘who gets to speak?’ and ‘about what?’ and it would have been useful to have seen some inclusion of this material here.

Part 2 of the Report then provides some short case studies from around Australia (mainly Victoria, since this is the prime focus for the writers) and internationally. These are interesting, but seldom ‘come alive’ and ultimately provide a fragmented set of examples to the new reader. It would have been useful to provide some categorisation or taxonomy of the examples, to map these against the theoretical perspectives

presented, and thus to provide some guidance for possible initiatives in schools. Or outside schools - for the report suggests, *inter alia*, that “student voices [need to be] involved with and represented in discussions about the content and processes of pre-service training ... [and] teacher professional learning activities.” (p. 17) (See *Connect* 154-155 for a practical example of this!)

Further, in exploring jurisdictional support for and use of student voice, very limited examples are provided - and strong contrasts can be drawn between the advocacy of an ‘attitudes to school’ survey with the UK chart presented earlier in the Report on ‘participatory standards’ (see below).

Overall, this report provides a useful summary and analysis of Student Voice (though with some omissions), but one is left with a sense of ‘so what?’ In its conclusion, the Report notes that “a lone teacher in a classroom using this approach may become frustrated and so too might the students if they see no general support for what they have to say, and no opportunity to influence school decisions and decision makers.” That is clearly also saying something about system responsibility.

I eagerly - and hopefully - await the follow-up Report that provides some more practical information and commitments about what is, can and will be done on what this timely Report acknowledges is a central issue for schools.

Roger Holdsworth

The Building Standards (for the active involvement of children and young people): UK National Youth Agency (2004)

Evidence of Planning	The organisation can describe and demonstrate how children and young people have been listened to on specific issues.
	Children and young people can describe and demonstrate how plans have been put in place to respond to what they say.
Evidence of Planning	The organisation can describe and demonstrate how plans have been put in place in response to what children and young people have said.
	Children and young people can describe and demonstrate how plans have been put in place in response to what they have said.
Evidence of Change	The organisation can describe and demonstrate what changes have resulted.
	Children and young people who have been involved can describe and demonstrate what changes have resulted.
	A wider group of children and young people and others in the community can describe and demonstrate improvements in response to the specific issues.

http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Student_Voice_report.pdf

News & Reviews

ruMAD? Website ReLaunch

RuMAD? (aRe yoU Making A Difference?) launched its new website in July. You can access the site at:

<http://www.rumad.org.au>

to engage with the student projects and achievements. You will need to register with the site - but this is available for free.

Get Connected – Take Action!

Student leaders launched their first promotional DVD at the 20th NSW State SRC Conference held this term.

The DVD, *Get Connected – Take Action!*, was developed by 22 NSW SRC members in collaboration with the Centre for Learning Innovation. The DVD contains a five-minute promotion encouraging students in public schools to get involved in school life through student leadership and SRC activities.

Noel Grannall, coordinator student leadership and SRCs in the department's student welfare directorate, said the DVD features vox pops of student leaders, footage of student-led school activities such as student bands and successful fund-raising ideas.

It is filled with "things that make kids enjoy going to school", he said.

"All the footage, photos, videos and music were created by the students and that's what makes it so special," Mr Grannall said.

The DVD was distributed to the 130 regional student leaders who attended the conference.

For details contact Noel Grannall,
E: noel.grannall@det.nsw.edu.au

KIM COTTON (from *Side by Side*, issue 12, September 2007)

PASTA Ceases Operations

Regular readers of *Connect* will notice that there's no *PASTA Newsletter* included in this issue. As we went to press, we learned that PASTA (the NSW-based Professional Association of SRC Teacher Advisers) has decided to cease operations. PASTA was set up in Sydney in 1995 and has been a regular contributor to *Connect* since then, with its newsletter included in the centre of *Connect* since 1997.

At this stage it is not clear whether the resources at the PASTA website will be maintained: check it at <http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta>

More information (hopefully) as it comes to hand, in future issues of *Connect*.

Kids Teaching Kids:

Addressing Our Environmental Crisis

We have finally compiled a book on the **kids teaching kids environmental education philosophy**. The book has been self-funded and once breaking even we intend to use the funds to support our river health conference program.

"Arron and Richard Wood's successful method of engaging youth on the big environmental challenges facing our planet is truly inspiring. They bring renewed hope for encouraging activism by future generations. This book is about the evolution of **Kids Teaching Kids** and its relevance as an effective formula for educating young people and motivating them to take action in their own lives both in and out of the classroom. Arron and Richard developed this highly effective model for Australian schools. The UN Works Program is collaborating with them to integrate this approach into educational outreach to students around the world."

Carmel Mulvany, Chief, UN Works Program

To get more tips on seeking sponsorship, or how to implement the **Kids Teaching Kids** methodology in your own school or community and see how business, industry and the wider public can build communities using the environment as a tool with an insight into the unique father/son relationship shared by Arron and Richard, order your copy by emailing info@fire-starter.com.au detailing your contact details and how many copies you'd like to order.

At 152 pages, this full colour book touches on past conference programs, inspiring students and teachers who have been involved in the river health conference initiative and even details how to run your own environmental event, complete with example budgets, media management and how to avoid event planning

pitfalls. Filled with case studies and interesting anecdotes this, they say, is a book not to be missed. The book includes a half hour DVD depicting **Kids Teaching Kids** in action. The book will retail for \$34.95, but discount orders are now available for \$25.00 plus postage for a single copy. There are further discounts available for bulk orders of 10 or more books so email them and they'll provide you with a quote. There will be a limited print run so they say to get in early if you intend to purchase a copy.

The book proceeds will support *Firestarter* to continue running **Kids Teaching Kids** programs across Australia.



Clearinghouse

Local and Overseas Publications Received



Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on:

(03) 9489 9052 or (03) 8344 9637

Australian:

AAPAE 7th Annual Conference Notice (Australian Association for Progressive and Alternative Education, Lane Cove, NSW) October 2007

Education Times (Victorian Department of Education, Vic) Vol 15 Nos 4, 5, 15; March, April, September 2007

Education Views (Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts, Qld) Vol 16, Nos 6-10; March-May 2007

FYI (Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne, Vic) June, September 2007; plus *Annual Report*, 2006

NSW SRC 2007 Report (NSW Department of Education and Training, NSW) 2007

Research Developments (ACER, Camberwell, Vic) No 17; Winter 2007

SFYS Newsletter (School Focused Youth Service, Whittlesea, Vic) Issue 28; April 2007

Student Voice: A historical perspective and new directions (Department of Education, Vic) Paper No 10; April 2007

TLN Journal (Teacher Learning Network, Abbotsford, Vic) Vol 14 No 2; Winter 2007

VicSRC Student Advocate (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 1 Nos 3, 4; April, August 2007

VicSRC 2nd Congress Report (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) May 2007

YAPRap (Youth Action and Policy Association, Surry Hills, NSW) Vol 17 Nos 4, 8, 9; April, September, October 2007

Yikes (YACVic, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 5 Editions 2, 3, 4; April-September 2007

Youth Research News (Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne, Vic) Vol 7; July 2007; plus *Annual Report*, 2006

Youth Studies Australia (Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tas) Vol 26 Nos 2, 3; June, September 2007

International:

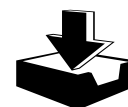
Education Revolution (AERA, New York, USA) Vol 19 No 1 (Issue 48) Spring 2007

Personalised Education Now (Nottingham, UK) Issue 6; Spring/Summer 2007

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Documents



The documents listed in this column may be of general background interest. A photocopy is available for research purposes. The length and cost (to cover copying and postage) is listed. Please order by code number.

A full, computerised index of these documents is now available from *Connect* for \$3; this can be accessed and printed by topic, key-word etc or simply sequentially.

Code Description/Pages/Cost

596 **2nd VicSRC Congress Report** (VicSRC) (25 pp; \$2.50)

597 **2007 NSW SRC Report** (NSW State SRC, August 2007) (10 pp; \$1.20)

598 **Student Voice: A historical perspective and new directions** (Atelier Learning Solutions P/L - for Victorian Department of Education, April 2007) Paper No. 10 (44 pp; \$4.40)

Connect has a website:

<http://www.geocities.com/rogermhold/Connect>

*Slowly growing with information about subscribing, some back issue contents and summaries of **Student Councils and Beyond** and **Student Action Teams**.*

Check in occasionally!

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• a primary/secondary school student subscription *	\$ 5	\$10
• an organisational (school, library etc) subscription	\$33	\$66
• a student organisation (SRC, JSC etc) subscription	\$11	\$22
• a supporting/sustaining subscription	\$55	\$110
• a lifetime subscription : ... forever: ...	\$1100	

* cannot be paid for with an organisational cheque

** all payments in AUD; add \$10 pa outside Australia

Subscription Sub-total: \$

MATERIALS:

Back issues of Connect (\$4 single; \$6 double issue). Circle issue/s required: \$

1980: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6/7; **1981:** 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; **1982:** 13/14, 15, 16, 17, 18; **1983:** 19, 20, 21, 22/23, 24; **1984:** 25, 26, 27/28, 29, 30; **1985:** 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36; **1986:** 37/38, 39, 40, 41, 42; **1987:** 43, 44, 45, 46/47, 48; **1988:** 49, 50, 51/52, 53, 54/55; **1989:** 56, 57, 58, 59, 60; **1990:** 61, 62, 63, 64, 65/66; **1991:** 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72; **1992:** 73, 74, 75, 76, 77/78; **1993:** 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84; **1994:** 85/86, 87, 88, 89, 90; **1995:** 91, 92, 93, 94, 95/96; **1996:** 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102; **1997:** 103, 104, 105, 106/107, 108/109; **1998:** 110, 111, 112, 113, 114; **1999:** 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120; **2000:** 121, 122, 123, 124/5, 126; **2001:** 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132; **2002:** 133/4, 135/6, 137, 138; **2003:** 139, 140, 141, 142, 143/4; **2004:** 145/6, 147, 148, 149, 150; **2005:** 151, 152, 153, 154/155, 156; **2006:** 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162; **2007:** 163, 164/5, 166/7

• **Cross-referenced index to contents of Connect back issues** (\$3) \$

*****SPECIAL OFFER: Any calendar year of Connect back issues (6 issues) (\$12)** *** \$

Miscellaneous Resources:

• **2005! Student Councils & Beyond** (\$33; \$27.50 for **Connect** subscribers) \$

• **2006! Student Action Teams** (\$33; \$27.50 for **Connect** subscribers) \$

• **NEW! Reaching High** (\$33; \$27.50 for **Connect** subscribers) \$

• **Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work** (1996) \$
Case studies of Primary School SRCs (\$6.60 or \$11 for two copies)

Foxfire Resources:

• **Sometimes a Shining Moment** (Wigginton) (\$22) \$

• **Foxfire: 25 Years** (Doubleday) (\$22) \$

Documents

• **Photocopies of the following documents:** \$

• **Cross-referenced Index to photocopies of documents** (\$3) \$

(all prices include GST + postage and
packaging within Australia)

Materials Sub-total: \$

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$